

DOMESTIC SERVICE AND DOMESTIC SPACE IN LONDON, 1750-1800

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University and The Geffrye Museum of the Home

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship of servants to the domestic spaces in which they lived and laboured. Although the place of servants within the ‘household family’ is well established, servants rarely feature as major characters in the literature on house, home, and domestic life. This thesis reintegrates servants into the contested narratives of the eighteenth-century space, and thinks-through the meaning of that space for the servants who lived and worked within it. The first two chapters offer an overtly bottom-up approach to the domestic space, which unapologetically shifts the focus from householder to servant, and from the much-examined world of parlour and drawing room to the neglected spaces of kitchen and garret. The first chapter, on the kitchen, outlines the significance of the kitchen and servants’ work to the domestic project. Rather than a space of separation and segregation, this chapter suggests the kitchen space managed ‘contact’ between household members and between the household and the outside world. The second chapter, on the garret, sketches-out the material parameters of the spaces allocated for servants to sleep, and suggests they offer insight into the ways in which the domestic space shaped the identities of servants – not only as social subordinates, but as gendered members of the labouring poor. The third chapter, on servants’ boxes considers the material items owned by servants in place, and the manner in which these items were accommodated within the domestic space. The focus on the box allows servants’ life histories to be written into the domestic space; items stored in boxes served as reminders of the past, and ‘imaginaries’ for the future. The fourth and final chapter thinks more explicitly about the material world inhabited by servants, demonstrates the significance of servants’ interaction with objects typically conceived as props of genteel domesticity, and reintegrates these objects into narratives of work, labour and industry.

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List of abbreviations

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| BM | British Museum |
| C&C | <i>Continuity and Change</i> |
| EHR | <i>Economic History Review</i> |
| GM | Geffrye Museum |
| G&H | <i>Gender & History</i> |
| THJ | <i>The Historical Journal</i> |
| HWJ | <i>History Workshop Journal</i> |
| JBS | <i>Journal of British Studies</i> |
| JSH | <i>Journal of Social History</i> |
| LMA | London Metropolitan Archives |
| NA | The National Archives |
| OBP | Tim Hitchcock, Robert Shoemaker, Clive Emsley, Sharon Howard and Jamie McLaughlin, <i>et al.</i> , <i>The Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 1674-1913</i> (www.oldbaileyonline.org , version 7.0) last accessed 23 rd April 2017 |
| P&P | <i>Past and Present</i> |

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Introduction

This thesis is about domestic service and domestic space in London between 1750 and 1800. It suggests that the study of domestic space and its material culture can offer new insights into service in the eighteenth century and that this spatial and material approach can circumvent the tempting loquacity of employer testimony. Although the place of servants within the ‘household family’ is well established, servants rarely feature as major characters in the literature on house, home, and domestic life.¹ Indeed, the idea of ‘home’ is typically defined in spatial and emotional terms through the exclusion of servants in favour of the ‘modern’ nuclear family. Much of the work on the eighteenth-century household charts a decline in the significance of servants, and an increasing distinction between servant and the (nuclear) family made manifest through architectural segregation, domestic choreography, and inter-personal manners and mores. Although live-in service remained hugely significant until well into the twentieth century, the place of servants within the household is assumed to have been concealed through a domestic ideology which stressed the house was the domain of the nuclear family, and was a space of leisure and ‘retreat’ from the world of work, and those responsible for it.² The dominant narrative of eighteenth-century domestic life is, therefore, that servants were ‘neatly tidied away’, ‘ejected’ from the main living spaces of family life, and that servants became ‘if not invisible [then] very much less visible’.³ By the end of the century ‘home’ and the domestic space are defined by the absence, or invisibility, of servants. It is the aim of this thesis to ‘make space’ for servants within the household, to reintegrate servants into the eighteenth-century domestic space, and to understand what this space meant for the servants who lived and worked within it.

If servants were once thought to be ‘invisible’ in the historical record, this is no longer the case.⁴ Servants have been recognised as key figures in the historical

¹ For ‘household family’ see N. Tadmor, ‘The Concept of the Household-Family in Eighteenth-Century England’, *P&P*, No. 151, (May, 1996), pp. 111-140.

² On the importance of service in the twentieth century see L. Delap, *Knowing their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth-Century Britain*, (Oxford, 2014).

³ M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History*, (Harmondsworth, 1980), p. 138.

⁴ D. A. Kent, ‘Ubiquitous but Invisible: Female Domestic Servants in Mid-Eighteenth Century London’, *HWJ*, No. 28, (1989), pp. 111-128.

narratives of the eighteenth century; they feature in demographic and family history, in histories of childhood and youth, accounts of poverty and the poor, histories of migration, crime, consumption, and the formation of class and gendered identities.⁵ They have also become important (if supporting) characters in individual and family biographies of their masters and mistresses, and in the literature on household, home, and domestic space.⁶ The variety of historical narratives in which servants appear is partly related to the scale of service in the past. Although the exact numbers of individuals employed in service in the eighteenth century is difficult to know, contemporary commentators were clear that servants constituted a significant proportion of their population, and that their numbers were growing- particularly in London.⁷ In 1767, for example, the philanthropist and reformer Jonas Hanway estimated that one in every thirteen people in the capital was employed as a domestic, an estimate that he had increased to one in every eight by 1775.⁸ Although we might assume that contemporaries like Hanway amplified the scale of the problem to justify the various schemes for its solution that they suggested, modern-

⁵ On servants and demographic and family history see: P. Laslett and R. Wall, *Household and Family in Past Time*, (London, 1972). On servants and youth see: I. K Ben-Amos, *Adolescence & Youth in Early Modern England*, (New Haven and London, 1994); P. Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560-1640*, (Oxford, 1996). On servants, poverty and crime see: P. King, 'Female Offenders, Work and Lifecycle Change in Late-Eighteenth-Century London', *C&C*, Vol. 11, Issue 1, (1996), pp. 61-90. On service and consumption see J. Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England*, (New Haven and London, 2008); C. Wigston Smith, 'Callico Madams: Servants, Consumption, and the Calico Crisis', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 31: 2, (2007), pp. 29-55. On service and gender see P. Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy, 1700-1850*, 1996, (New York, 2000); T. Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender 1660-1750: Life and Work in the London Household*, (Harlow, 2000). On service and class see C. Steedman, *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England*, (Cambridge, 2009); L. Schwartz, 'What We Feel is Needed is a Union for Domestic Workers Such as the Miners Have': The Domestic Workers' Union of Great Britain and Ireland 1908-1914', *Twentieth-Century British History*, Vol. 25, Issue 2, (2014), pp. 173-192.

⁶ See K. Lipsedge, *Domestic Space in Eighteenth-Century British Novels*, (London, 2012); A. Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England*, 2007, (Woodbridge, 2011), esp. pp. 47-51; P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730*, (Chatham, 1989), esp. pp. 213-230; A. Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*, (New Haven and London, 1998), esp. pp. 134-146.

⁷ Estimating numbers is particularly difficult in the eighteenth century. On the 1695 Marriage Duty Assessment, see V. Harding, 'Families and Housing in Seventeenth-Century London', *Parergon*, Vol. 24, No. 2, (2002), pp. 115-38; M. Merry, '"For the House Her Self and One Servant": Family and Household in Late Seventeenth-Century London', *The London Journal: A Review of Metropolitan Society Past and Present*, Vol. 34, Issue 3, (2009), pp. 205-232. On the 1851 census see B. Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England*, 1989, (London, 1994), pp. 125-126; E. Higgs, 'Domestic Servants and Households in Victorian England', *Social History*, vol. 8, No. 2, (1983), pp. 201-10.

⁸ J. Hanway, *Letters on the Importance of Preserving the Rising Generation of the Labouring Part of Our Fellow Subjects*, (London, 1767), p. 11, p. 158; Hanway, *The Defects of Police and the Cause of Immorality*, (London, 1775), p. 267. For a discussion of this literature see J.J Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England*, (London, 1956), p. 34; Hill, *Women, Work & Sexual Politics*, pp. 125-126; Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, pp. 13-15.

day historians have tended to agree with their estimates. From an analysis of the 1695 marriage duty assessment, Peter Earle also estimated that one thirteenth (or 7.7%) of London's population was in service at the turn of the eighteenth century.⁹ The precise figure is not important; as we shall see, the definition of service is so difficult and the movement in-and-out of service so commonplace that any such figure appears suspect. The point is that service was an incredibly common experience in the capital, and live-in service a widespread domestic arrangement.

Although a widespread domestic arrangement, the relationship between servants and the eighteenth-century domestic space has not yet been the subject of study. The focus of this thesis is on households within the City of London and its environs; the geographical focus is not intended to suggest the typicality of these arrangements, but their significance. For Tim Meldrum, London was the 'acknowledged centre of domestic service in Britain' at the beginning of the eighteenth century.¹⁰ Although other urban centres were growing over the course of the period, London continued to act as a powerful magnet for migrants, the expanding (and diversifying) population of the capital supplying a ready market for domestics.¹¹ The variety of trades and professions practised within the metropolis provides a locus through which to explore the relationship between servants and different types of households. Recent research has done much to correct an over-reliance on the narratives of service in elite and genteel establishments, and has revealed that the majority of servants were employed in households much further down the social scale. Meldrum calculated that at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century more servants were employed in the households of textile manufacturers, retailers and shopkeepers than in the houses of merchants and other professionals, for example.¹² Although the focus of this thesis is on these smaller, more numerically significant households, it does not focus exclusively on them, nor does it make a claim for servant-keeping as the defining characteristic of a 'middling' identity.¹³ The decision to take on a servant did not stem from a quantifiable income, or necessarily a claim to gentility or respectability, but on the needs of individual households which might vary according

⁹ Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 76, p. 357 (footnote 187).

¹⁰ Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 12.

¹¹ On the significance of towns see P. J. Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns, 1700-1800*, (Oxford, 1982).

¹² Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 22-23.

¹³ On this see Higgs, 'Domestic Servants' p. 207; J. Hamlett, *Material Relations; Domestic Interiors and Middle-Class Families in England, 1850-1910*, (Manchester, 2010), p. 14.

to life cycle, trade, and personal circumstance. This influenced not only the number of servants that were employed within the household, but the roles they undertook within it, and who it was that was employed in them. Peter Earle found that over 89% of all servant-employing households in the metropolitan area employed one to three servants, and that 56.8% of these households employed only one, who was usually a female ‘maid of all work’ typically under the age of thirty.¹⁴ The expansive hierarchies and ‘idle retinues’ particularly of male servants that were depicted in contemporary illustrations and complained about in the periodical press were the minority; the majority of servants in the capital (and elsewhere) were female and were employed in small numbers in households further down the social scale. This thesis reflects that concentration of individuals.

Home/work

This thesis was completed in collaboration with The Geffrye Museum of the Home, London (hereafter the Geffrye). It is one of four collaborative studentships that were designed to study the connections between home and work in London from the eighteenth century to the present day. The home/work project builds on the agenda set out by the Geffrye-led Histories of Home Subject Specialist Network symposium ‘Home-work’ held in 2009, selected papers from which were published in a special issue of *Home Cultures* in 2011.¹⁵ The ‘Home-work’ symposium and special issue sought to explore the complex meanings of home, and to deviate from the long-held and deeply ingrained assumption that it was a ‘haven’ from work. Instead, the contributors explored the many ways in which work permeated the once sacrosanct boundary of the domestic space, and reformulated the adversarial relationship between home and work. Domestic work (both paid and unpaid) was central to this endeavour, and servants appeared frequently in the pages of the special issue as a result.¹⁶ Following this publication, the home/work- doctoral projects have attempted to do more than simply explore the connections between two discrete

¹⁴ P. Earle, *A City Full of People: Men and Women of London, 1650-1750*, (London, 1994), p. 124-125. Also see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 15-17.

¹⁵ J. Hamlett and L. Hoskins, ‘Introduction’, *Home Cultures*, Issue 2, Vol. 8, (2011), pp. 109-117.

¹⁶ See, in particular, A. Flather, ‘Gender, Space, and Place; The Experience of Service in the Early Modern English Household, c. 1580-1720’, *Home Cultures*, Issue 2, Vol. 8, (2011), pp. 171-188; L. Delap, ‘Housework, Housewives, and Domestic Workers; Twentieth-Century Dilemmas of Domesticity’, pp. 188-210 in the same issue.

terms; instead they have flowed from an assumption that the meanings of home and work are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing. Laura Humphreys' research on domestic labour in the metropolitan household from 1850-1914 explored the ways in which the home-making practices for which the Victorians are famed relied upon domestic labour, and the manner in which this labour was linked to broader forces of nation, empire and the wider world.¹⁷ Annabelle Wilkins' thesis on Vietnamese migrants in the contemporary east end of London suggested the ways in which ideas and practices of home might be constituted through spaces typically aligned with work; a shrine set up in a student's bedroom, or in a restaurant, might evoke strong feelings and associations of home, for example.¹⁸ Robert Stephenson's research similarly reveals the complex manner through which home and work are negotiated by men in present-day London. For these men, home work and paid work frequently took place within the same spaces, with tasks such as childcare shuttling between these two poles.¹⁹ If the chronological span of the overall doctoral programme has encouraged conclusions about continuity in the complexities of the relationship between home and work, it also acknowledged that these ideas, and the practices which stem from them, are historically specific.

The fifty years covered by this thesis has been recognised as a significant period in the history of both home and work. As discrete ideological constructions and spatially and temporally demarcated spaces, both 'home' and 'work' are understood to have been forged in the fires of the Industrial Revolution.²⁰ The period was clearly a significant moment in the history of industrial production in Britain and 'revolutionary' or not, witnessed a significant shift in ideas about work, labour and occupational identity.²¹ The period has also, and not unrelatedly, been recognised to

¹⁷ L. Humphreys, *Domestic Labour, Metropolitan Middle-Class Households and the Wider World, 1850-1914*, PhD thesis, QMUL, (2016).

¹⁸ A. Wilkins, *Home, Work and Migration for Vietnamese Migrants in the East End of London*, PhD thesis, QMUL, (2016).

¹⁹ R. Stephenson, *Men Juggling Work, Home and Family in Contemporary London*, PhD thesis, QMUL, (forthcoming).

²⁰ For the classic statements see A. Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*, (London, 1919); I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, 1930 (London, 1969). For a more nuanced account see L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class. 1780-1850*, 1987, (London, 1988); J. Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, (New Haven and London, 1999). For criticism see A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *THJ*, Vol. 36, No. 2, (1993), pp. 383-414.

²¹ The literature on the Industrial Revolution is enormous. See the discussion in H-J, Voth, *Time and Work in England during the Industrial Revolution*, (Oxford, 2010); H. Hatcher, 'Labour, Leisure and

witness an important transition in the function and meaning of the household. The complex changes of urbanisation, industrialisation, and of ‘modernity’ as broadly defined are understood to have transformed the function and meaning of the place of residence.²² As state institutions and the market expanded, the domestic space is thought to have been emptied of its role in productive labour and in the political economy as a powerful ideology of ‘domesticity’ infused the space of the home. The idea of home itself is thought to have come into being at this point of separation between home and work, labour and leisure, ‘private’ house and ‘public’ world. The gendered and class-specific nature of this ideology was outlined in Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall’s influential *Family Fortunes*. For these scholars, although the idea of home played an important role in the construction of distinct gendered identities (or spheres), it also unified the nineteenth-century middle class through the celebration of the privacy and intimacy of the affectionate (nuclear) family – typically within the home.²³ If this domestic ideal is thought to have culminated in the nineteenth century, the meanings of home in the eighteenth century have only recently begun to be explored.²⁴ For Karen Harvey, the eighteenth century witnessed the transformation in meanings of the term from definitions which focused on the physical location of the house or place of abode to ‘deep’ meanings which stressed understandings of the home as ‘separate, comforting and familiar, a place of belonging’.²⁵ Although the extent, timing and practical limitations of an understanding of the house as ‘home’ have been debated, there is no doubt that by the end of the period covered by this thesis, the domestic space was at the centre of a powerful domestic ideal which, although at the heart of gender and class relations, left little space for servants, or for the work completed by them.

Although a variety of terms are used throughout this thesis to describe the households in which servants lived and worked, it is the domestic space that best expresses the focus and analytical framework adopted by it. The terminology adopted by scholars reveals the academic priorities and questions asked by them.

Economic Thought Before the Nineteenth Century’, *P&P*, No. 160, (1998), pp. 64-115; M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures, 1700-1820*, (London, 1985).

²² On the complexity of the term ‘modernity’ see M. Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity; London’s Geographies, 1680-1780*, (New York, 1998).

²³ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, esp. p. 319, p. 359.

²⁴ On nineteenth-century domesticity and ideas of home see M. Ponsonby, *Stories from Home: English Domestic Interiors, 1750-1850*, (Aldershot, 2007); Tosh, *A Man’s Place*.

²⁵ K. Harvey, ‘Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, *G&H*, Vol. 21, Issue 3, (2009), p. 526.

Scholarship on the 'house', for example, tends to focus on the built structure of particular residences and on the achievements of architects and the stylistic development of period 'styles'. Although such research has proved invaluable for understanding the spaces servants inhabited, this connoisseurial focus has concealed the complex ways in which its function and material constitution relate to broader changes in social organisation and the economy. Such scholarship also generally focuses only on the designs of the (usually male) owner-occupier; the house is conceived simply as a product of their 'taste' and the experiences of other members of the household are assumed to be inconsequential.²⁶ If the focus of scholarship on the 'house' appears preoccupied with a fairly one-dimensional understanding of the material world, the focus on the 'household' tends to float above the material realities of everyday life. The household has long been recognised as an important organising concept of early modern and eighteenth-century society, but a focus on households suggests an interest in the social relationships operating within a particular residence to the detriment of material realities and locatedness.²⁷ The concept of the 'household family' challenged anachronistic assumptions about the significance of the nuclear family, and acknowledged that servants were a significant part of the residential unit, or the 'family' as it was understood in the eighteenth century.²⁸ However important the concept of the 'household family' has been in challenging the hegemonic understandings of the nuclear family and 'making space' for servants, it is a term that is generally built around the language-use of the master and/or mistress, and is focused on the residence of which they were a part.²⁹ If neither 'house' nor 'household' makes sufficient space for servants, 'home', as we have seen, is more problematic still. Although the term was used throughout the eighteenth century by various members of the household (including servants) to describe the place of residence, connotations with the 'deep' meaning of home identified by Harvey, and the complex associations of separation and belonging

²⁶ For more complex understanding of women's role in the built environment see, for example, A. Friedman, 'Architecture, Authority, and the Female Gaze: Planning and Representations in the Early Modern Country House', *Assemblage*, No. 18, (1992), pp. 40-61. Also see the *Gender, Place and Memory, 1400-1900* project at the University of Hull < <https://womenandland.wordpress.com/> >

²⁷ S. Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*, (New York, 1988), esp. pp. 34-66. On this see A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England*, (New Haven, 2009), p. 3.

²⁸ See footnote 1.

²⁹ For an exception to this see Hamlett and Barker, H. Barker and J. Hamlett, 'Living above the Shop: Home, Business, and Family in the English 'Industrial Revolution'', *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 35, No. 4, (2010), pp. 317-318.

(usually to a nuclear family), mean that it is a problematic analytical category through which to explore the relationship of servants to the space in which they lived and laboured. Although house, household, and home are used throughout this thesis to refer to specific locations, social groupings, and particular residences, it is the domestic space that best encompasses the subject and analytical framework which governs this thesis.

‘Domestic’ is, of course, a no less contested term. Scholars continue to debate exactly which spaces ‘count’ as domestic and what it might mean in particular contexts and periods.³⁰ For the purposes of this thesis, the domestic is used not as a synonym for domesticity, nor to distinguish spaces of residence from those of business, but to refer to the variety of spaces which were inhabited by servants and the members of the household in which they lived and worked. As Amanda Vickery has suggested, the domestic was a ‘baggy’ category in the eighteenth century, and its borders remain elastic throughout this thesis; the domestic spaces discussed here include public, victualling and coffee houses, yards, shops and workshops, stables and necessary houses as well as those spaces which might appear in histories of the domestic interior, as traditionally understood.³¹ Following the example of recent work which has sought to move beyond the binaries between a ‘private’ domestic space and ‘public’ world, this thesis is not concerned with erecting or defining the borders of the domestic space, but with the ways in which domestic activity reflected and acted-on larger historical criteria.³² Rather than referring to a specific spatial definition, then, the domestic space is used throughout this thesis as the focus of analysis. The domestic space was the location in which servants spent much of their time, was where they encountered their masters and mistresses, where they learned the skills and expectations of domestic life, and through which they worked towards a household of their own. It was the setting of innumerable social and material constellations through which these individuals understood and experienced their place within society. Although focused on particular spaces, material objects and material practices, this study does not simply locate these actions within the spatial

³⁰ K. Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (Oxford, 2012), esp. pp. 8-14; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, esp. p. 53; A. LeZotte, ‘Defining Domestic: An Examination of the Characteristics and Functions of the Home Setting in Early Netherlandish Paintings’, *Home Cultures*, Vol. 6. Issue, 1 (2009), pp. 5-18.

³¹ Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, esp. p. 53

³² On this see Harvey, *The Little Republic*, esp. pp. 10-11.

boundaries of the household in which servants lived and worked, but within a larger narrative about eighteenth-century service and society. It is certainly not an argument of this thesis that eighteenth-century servants were incarcerated within the house; they were frequently found on the city streets, fetching beer, changing coins, walking with the children of the house, visiting friends and family, going on errands and carrying letters and messages between households. The presence of servants outside the house does not, however, detract from the significance of the domestic space for understanding the experience of service. Partly, this is because of the theoretical and conceptual connection between the household and the world beyond; it is not the case that the experiences of the domestic were bounded by the walls of the household. Although this thesis focuses on spaces, practices and material objects that were generally to be found within the household, and argues for the importance of the domestic space as a locus of social action, it speaks to much broader historical trajectories and narratives. The domestic space is explored not as a space apart, but as a rich setting through which broad historical change was experienced and understood.³³

Family member to employee?

If the period from 1750 to 1800 has been understood as a significant moment in the history of the meaning and practices of both ‘home’ and ‘work’, it has also, and not unrelatedly, been understood as a key moment in the history of the master-servant relationship. Although there is disagreement about the extent and timing of change, this transformation has been characterised by Sheila McIsaac Cooper as the shift of the servant from ‘family member to employee’.³⁴ The transformation typically focuses on the erosion of the paternalistic duties and obligations that characterised early modern service in the face of an increasingly distant and wage-based relationship between employer and employee. It might also be understood to reflect a

³³ On this see A. Blunt and R. Dowling, *Home*, (London, 2006), esp. 14.

³⁴ S. McIsaac Cooper, ‘From Family Member to Employee: Aspects of Continuity and Discontinuity in English Domestic Service, 1600-2000’ in A. Fauve-Chamoux (ed.), *Domestic Service and the Formation of European Identity, Understanding the Globalization of Domestic Work, 16th-21st Centuries*, (Bern, 2004), pp. 277-296. Also see T. McBride, *The Domestic Revolution: The Modernisation of Household Service in England and France, 1820-1920*, (London, 1976); C. Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies: Servants and their Masters in Old Regime France*, (London, 1984), esp. pp. 13-20; Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics*, pp. 125-147; B. Hill, *Servants: English Domesticity in the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1996); Steedman, *Labours Lost*. For an argument about continuity rather than change see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, esp. p. 70.

shift in the meaning of the domestic space from a ‘home’ – or at least a place of familial residence– in the seventeenth century – to a place of ‘work’ by the nineteenth. This thesis explores the meaning of the domestic space between 1750 and 1800, a key point of juncture.

The historiography of early modern service is characterised by a focus on the servant as family member. The focus of these accounts is on the mutual obligations and duties between master and servant, and on the householder’s position in *loci parentis*.³⁵ Within a broad framework of obligation and duty, the variety of interpersonal relationships that could exist between servant and master have been acknowledged. Bernard Capp, for example, drew attention to the affective bonds of service which might last beyond the term of place, and which suggested not only duty, but affection and even familial ‘love’, but also highlighted the vulnerabilities of servitude, and the barbarity, cruelty and petty one-upmanship that servants might be subject to.³⁶ The focus on the servant as family member has generated an interest in the functioning of the household, and the ways in which status was performed within it. It is certainly not the case that the early modern household was in any sense egalitarian; gradations of status were carefully policed and keenly felt. Tim Meldrum used the disputes over wills heard before the Prerogative Court of Canterbury to suggest the ways in which household status was performed through a variety of spatial practices.³⁷ Elizabeth Vickers’ claim as the executor of Edward Atwood’s will was, for example, disputed by a witness who claimed Vickers was Atwood’s servant. The witness described how Vickers ‘lighted them out of the door’, explained that they had ‘given money to [her] when they so dined’, that she ‘constantly and on all occasions says Sir when she spoke to him’, and did ‘not dine at his table but waited on him, and... used frequently to dine and sup with the char woman’.³⁸ Distinctions between the degrees of power and status within the household were also found to be articulated through everyday spatial practices in the Essex church court records examined by Amanda Flather. If, in larger households, servants and apprentices ate

³⁵ See, for example, P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, (London, 1965); Amussen, *An Ordered Society*.

³⁶ B. Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England*, (Oxford, 2003). Peter Earle suggests that Pepys was ‘genuinely fond’ of many of the servants in his family, see Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, pp. 224-225. On the social similarities of servant and master in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 105.

³⁷ Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 145.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

at a 'lower' table in the hall, in smaller households social difference was demonstrated through seating on forms and benches rather than chairs, and through the order and hierarchies of serving, as well as the quality and quantity of the food served.³⁹ The subordinate position of servants in the house was also demonstrated through the provision of space for sleeping with domestics expected to bed down in spaces which were more crowded, temporary and uncomfortable than those occupied by other members of the household.⁴⁰ The focus on servant as family member has revealed a variety of spatial practices that operated within the household, but has focused on the activities associated with social reproduction – with sleeping, eating, and gathering at table – to the exclusion of other activities and interpretive frameworks.

Perhaps most problematic, the focus on the servant as family member has concealed the work completed by them within the house. As Tim Meldrum has suggested, 'historians of service have been much more absorbed by the implications of service for social relations than by the work servants performed'.⁴¹ This is partly the result of the source material; in seventeenth and early-eighteenth century literature, servants' work was constructed as a duty of obedience to their masters and mistresses and is generally hidden behind exhortations to obedience.⁴² Understanding which tasks servants were responsible for is also difficult because of contemporary understandings of labour which subjugated the person of the servant to that of the master and/or mistress. As Carolyn Steedman suggested, it was John Locke who first identified servants' work as labour that was not attributable to the person of the servant. The seventeenth-century discussion focused on the male servant in husbandry, and located the labour done by him firmly in the hands of his master. Locke's infamous formulation argued that: '[t]he grass my horse has bit, the turfs my servant has cut...become my property... The labour that was mine removed them out of that common state that they were in, has fixed my property in them'.⁴³ The labour of servants was understood by Locke as a capacity of the master. In the act of hiring, the labour performed by him was transferred to the person of the master, and the servant was understood merely as an extension of that person, an automaton, or as

³⁹ Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 63-66.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 68-70. On this see chapter two, esp. pp. 107-113.

⁴¹ Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 128.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 128-130.

⁴³ Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p. 48.

their master's 'hands'.⁴⁴ The lack of detailed evidence about the types of tasks servants were employed to undertake, and the continued framing of this work in the context of the family, has encouraged interpretations of the early modern household as an economically productive unit, a space in which household members and servants of both sexes worked together to further the interests of the group. Where their work is considered, servants and apprentices are assumed to have participated in a variety of productive and reproductive tasks alongside their masters and mistresses. The nostalgic yearning for the hearty cooperation of the subsistence-driven household parallels that for the early modern 'Golden Age' of women's work identified by Amanda Vickery.⁴⁵ Like that 'Golden Age', the precise historical and geographical coordinates of this pre-modern utopia remains unclear, and assumptions about the harmonious workings of the economically-productive household undoubtedly conceals the backbreaking work and anxieties of impoverishment facing the individuals within it. Although portrayed as a valued, useful and productive part of the household family in a loosely defined early modern period, the nature of the tasks in which the majority of servants were employed were also likely to have been as demeaning, laborious, socially stigmatised and highly gendered as those that would await them in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

If the eighteenth century has been identified as a period in which the 'intangible ties of duty' were replaced with a 'cash nexus', the understanding of the servant as 'employee' similarly conceals the complexities of the service relationship.⁴⁶ Even if the relationship between servant and their master and/or mistress was governed solely by the 'cash nexus' (which, as recent scholarship has demonstrated, it was not), service remained a problematic occupational category in the eighteenth century.⁴⁷ This is partly related to the problematic definition of service in the period. Within the limits of the term 'servant' multiple identities abound. Paula Humfrey suggested that scholars working on service 'are challenged to describe their subject

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁴⁵ Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres'.

⁴⁶ Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, esp. pp. 13-20. On complex ways in which the cash economy intersected with other forms of exchange see A. Offer, 'Between the Gift and the Market: the Economy of Regard', *EHR*, Vol. 50, Issue 3, (1997), pp. 450-476; C. Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England*, (Basingstoke, 1998).

⁴⁷ C. Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age*, (Cambridge, 2007).

clearly on account of the difficulty of defining it precisely'.⁴⁸ The breadth of definitions was similarly apparent to contemporaries. Richard Mayo, a nonconformist minister writing at the end of the seventeenth century, advised his readers that there was 'scarce any general Name of a Calling that contains under it such different kinds of Persons, as this of a Servant'.⁴⁹ 'Servant' remained something of a catch-all category in the eighteenth century, and encompassed a wide range of identities and individuals. Although the legal status of servants (as opposed to slaves) was a source of contemporary pride, the definition of service remained problematic.⁵⁰ For Humfrey, eighteenth-century domestics 'fell into the interstices between ... definitions' because service 'was an experience of considerable variance from the institution as its traditions had developed among masters hiring farm servants'.⁵¹ It was the 1563 Statute of Artificers that was the foundation for all legislation concerning service for much of the century. Although the Statute provided for the yearly hiring of servants in husbandry, the flexible working of artificers and workmen and the daily contracts of day labourers, domestic servants were conspicuously absent. Even in the eighteenth century, the distinction between domestic and other types of servant was not clearly drawn; the 1767 text *Laws Concerning Masters and Servants*, for example, referred to four subcategories of servants; the author addressed 'clerks', 'apprentices', 'menial servants' and 'labourers, journeymen, artificers, handicraftsmen, and other workmen'.⁵² Menial servants were defined by their place within the domestic space (the author suggested they were 'so called from being *intra maenia*, or domestics'), and their identity as 'workers' was more problematic.⁵³ If 'servant' was a category of social relationship for much of the eighteenth century, its meaning was contracting by the nineteenth.

⁴⁸ P. Humfrey, *The Experience of Domestic Service for Women in Early Modern London*, (Farnham, 2011), p. 25.

⁴⁹ R. Mayo, *A Present for Servants, From Their Ministers, Masters, Or Other Friends, Especially in Country Parishes*, (London, 1692), p. 1.

⁵⁰ K. Straub, *Domestic Affairs: Intimacy, Eroticism, and Violence between Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (Baltimore, 2009), p. 69; Unfortunately, I have not been able to address the issue of slavery, race or nationality in this thesis. There is very little information about these very important aspects of social identity in the sources I consulted and it has been omitted as a result. On slavery in England see C. Hall, N. Draper, K. McClelland, K. Donington and R. Lang, *Legacies of British Slave-ownership: Colonial Slavery and the Formation of Victorian Britain*, (Cambridge, 2014). On the relationship between nationality, race and contemporary domestic work in contemporary society see R. Cox, *The Servant Problem: The Home Life of Global Economy*, (London and New York, 2006).

⁵¹ Humfrey, *Experience of Domestic Service*, p. 11, p. 25.

⁵² *Laws Concerning Masters and Servants, By a Gentleman of the Inner-Temple*, (London, 1767).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Carolyn Steedman has argued that the tax on men servants (from 1777-1852) and the more contentious tax on maid servants (from 1785-1792) encouraged the specialisation of domestic roles and helped create a definition of servant based on the tasks completed by them.⁵⁴ The tax, according to Steedman:

...had perceptible effect on how households were organised, from making sure that a servant in husbandry was never seen leading the horse out of the stable (for that would make him a 'stable boy' – a servant 'within the meaning of the act'), to judges of the King's Bench and Tax Office officials solemnly deliberating the question of 'Labourers or Husbandmen...Cleaning Boots'.

Although the tax on maid servants was heavily criticised and much shorter-lived, it too affected the definitions of servitude. As Steedman suggests: 'A shopkeeper might want to see to it that the maidservant did very little kitchen business, stayed visibly in the shop, for the first rendered the employer liable (between 1785 and 1792) to the tax, and her assistance behind the counter did not'.⁵⁵

If the difficulty of understanding servants as workers was partly related to the ambiguity of legal definition in the eighteenth century, it is also related to a much more longstanding difficulty with understanding domestic work as 'work'. This difficulty is compounded by the slippage between paid work done by domestic workers and unpaid work done by other members of the household (typically constructed in terms of a heavily gendered familial duty and affection), and the location of such labour within the domestic space. Although Carolyn Steedman has demonstrated that eighteenth-century servants had a strong sense of themselves as workers, she also suggested that it was in the eighteenth century that servants' work was first defined as non work.⁵⁶ It was Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) that explicitly contrasted the productive labour that was the backbone of economic development and national growth with domestic labour which he claimed:

...does not fix or realise itself in any particular or vendible commodity. Her services generally perish in the very instant of their performance, and seldom

⁵⁴ Steedman, *Labours Lost*, esp. p. 133. On the servant tax also see S. E. Brown, 'Assessing Men and Maids: The Female Servant Tax and the Meanings of Productive Labour in Late-Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Left History*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (2007), pp. 11- 32.

⁵⁵ For much earlier complaints about specialisation of service roles see D. Defoe, *Everybody's Business is No-Body's Business*, (London, 1725), pp. 17-18.

⁵⁶ Steedman, *Labours Lost*, esp. pp. 16- 20.

leave any trace or value behind them for which an equal quantity of service could afterwards be produced.⁵⁷

This understanding of domestic work as perishing in the instance of performance, and as having no ‘trace’ or ‘value’, has had a long legacy. In the two centuries since *The Wealth of Nations* was published, domestic tasks have been repeatedly constructed as non work. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir famously likened the repetition of domestic toil to torture:

Few tasks are more similar to the torment of Sisyphus than those of the housewife: day after day, one must wash dishes, dust furniture, mend clothes that will be dirty, dusty, and torn again. The housewife wears herself out running on the spot; she does nothing; she only perpetuates the present; she never gains the sense that she is conquering a positive Good, but struggles indefinitely against Evil. It is a struggle that begins again every day. We know the story of the valet who despondent refused to polish his master’s books. ‘What’s the point?’ he asked: ‘You have to begin again the next day’.⁵⁸

De Beauvoir understood the everyday actions of housework to erase themselves, and their enactors, from history. The work had no ‘product’, the clean became soiled over and over again, and the battle against dirt was never won. De Beauvoir understood housework as one of the mechanisms of patriarchy, one of the many ways in which women were oppressed, their creative capabilities dulled by the relentless demands of domestic maintenance. For de Beauvoir, like many scholars of the subject, it is the essentially unproductive nature of this work that was so unbearable – the housewife ‘does nothing, simply perpetuates the present’. If freedom from domestic work was the answer to women’s liberation for de Beauvoir, the 1970s wages for housework campaign sought a different route. Domestic work was acknowledged by them as work, as having a powerful role in social reproduction, and as acting as the foundation of all other economic and industrial activity.⁵⁹ Rather than being understood as a ‘natural’ part of women’s role, performed through a biological duty of affection, the culturally constructed nature of housework was recognised. Because the campaign was concerned with de-naturalising women’s responsibility over domestic work, and highlighting the ‘double burden’ of paid and domestic labour,

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, esp. p. 16, p. 170.

⁵⁸ S. d. Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 1949, C. Borde and S. Malovany-Chevallier trans. 2009, (New York, 2010), p. 539.

⁵⁹ See S. Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*, (Oakland, CA, 2012).

this work focused on unpaid domestic labours rather than on paid domestic work or on service.⁶⁰

The historical literature on service has tended to focus on the extent of transformation of the service role ‘from family member to employee’. This is an important question, with profound and far-reaching implications. As Jeanne Clegg has recently suggested, it relates to what she calls a ‘smouldering debate about the long eighteenth century as a whole’.⁶¹ For Clegg, the changes which are identified – changes which relate to the monetization of domestic service, the distancing of social relations between master and servants, and the ‘work’ demanded of them- ‘add up to something we call modernisation’ and therefore that ‘where we locate that process... determines where we set the cut off between early modern and modern’.⁶² This thesis does not make a case for a precise cut-off point between servant as ‘family member’ and servant as ‘employee’, nor does it further an argument about the domestic space as either a space of ‘home’ or of ‘work’, or of servant as ‘family member’ or ‘employee’. Instead, it suggests that these models were not mutually exclusive or necessarily inevitably chronologically consecutive arrangements. Aspects of each co-existed in this period, and were negotiated and made sense of within the domestic space. The scholarly obsession with pin-pointing moments of change or aspects of continuity (and in so-doing identifying the eighteenth century as a period of tradition and custom *or* of innovation and ‘modernity’), has restricted attempts to understand late-eighteenth-century service on its own terms, and concealed the manner in which historical change in all periods is incorporated within everyday tasks and within the structures and assumptions of the day before.

Domestic service and domestic space

Although rarely explicitly articulated, domestic space is heavily implicated in the historiography of service. Indeed, the transformation from ‘family member to employee’ is thought to have manifested itself in the architectural specialisation of

⁶⁰ For eighteenth-century examples of the ‘double burden’ see M. Collier, *The Woman’s Labour: An Epistle to Stephen Duck*, (London, 1739).

⁶¹ J. Clegg, ‘Good to Think with: Domestic Servants, England 1660-1750’, *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, No. 4., (2015), p. 45.

⁶² *Ibid.*

eighteenth-century households. For many scholars, changes in the built environment have been read as evidence of the growing social distance between servant and master and/or mistress, and the new desire by masters and mistresses to separate themselves and their children from the servants of the house. It is assumed that the physical separation of family and servant was self-evident by the late eighteenth-century (especially in larger households) and that this changing layout reflected and reinforced an increasing social distance between servant and master. What scholars working on present-day domestic workers have termed 'the embarrassment of co-presence' is understood to have had its roots in the eighteenth century.⁶³ If this literature recognised how difficult these living arrangements might be for contemporary domestic workers, the scholarship on service in the past is generally constructed only from the point-of-view of the master and/or mistress. Perhaps more problematic is that domestic separation is understood as the result of the particular predilection that has come to characterise scholarly discussion of change in the eighteenth-century domestic space. In these texts, the desire for separation is discussed – almost exclusively – in terms of a new desire for 'privacy' on the part of the family.⁶⁴ For Mark Girouard, the presence of servants was 'taken for granted in the earlier decades... [but came to] grate...on people's increasing sense of privacy'. As soon as 'families began to value their privacy' it is said, 'they *inevitably* started to escape from their servants' (my emphasis).⁶⁵ The family's 'escape' from the servants was thought to have been permitted through the proliferation of more 'private' spaces, such as bedchambers, parlours and closets, by the removal of service areas and kitchens 'below stairs', and by the development of 'distancing' technologies such as the servants' bell, and separate servants' staircase. The eighteenth-century domicile, according to this interpretation, is not only understood as the key setting for the

⁶³ Z. Búriková, 'The Embarrassment of Co-Presence: Au Pairs and their Rooms', *Home Cultures*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, (2006), pp. 99-122.

⁶⁴ On privacy see C. Heyl, 'We Are Not At Home: Protecting Domestic Privacy in Post-Fire Middle-Class London', *London Journal*, Vol. 27, Issue 2, (2002), pp. 12-33, p. 12. For criticism see A. Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is His Castle? Thresholds, Boundaries and Privacies in the Eighteenth-Century London House', *P&P*, No. 199, (2008), pp. 147- 173 and L. Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, (1995), pp. 97-109

⁶⁵ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, p. 11. For similar argument see R. Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England*, (London, 1978), p. 128. Also see Stone, *Broken Lives: Separation and Divorce in England, 1660-1857*, (Oxford, 1993), p. 212, p. 229; Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*, (London, 1977), pp. 254-5.

forging of the affective nuclear family, and a crucible for the new distinctions of class, but also as evidence of this change.

The connection between architectural change and the ‘privacy’ of the family has faced sustained criticism. Tim Meldrum is perhaps the most scathing critic of an understanding of familial privacy as the main impetus for architectural change, and questioned *whose* privacy was being considered in these narratives.⁶⁶ Meldrum also suggested that separate sleeping spaces, kitchens, and bell pulls were evident in large London households well before the chronology outlined by these scholars and queried the extent to which these innovations could be understood simply as ‘the material culture of privacy’.⁶⁷ ‘It is not possible’, he argued, ‘that the advent of bells to summon servants may have simply originated with a fashionable distaste for shouting rather than a desire on behalf of employers to distance themselves from their domestic employees?’⁶⁸ Alternative (and similarly practical) ideas for the proliferation of domestic spaces have since been advanced by other scholars. Lena Orlin suggested that the domestic specialisation of the sixteenth century was as much about the ordering and making sense of the proliferation of material ‘stuff’ as it was an attempt to segregate people, and isolate servants.⁶⁹ Davidoff and Hall have similarly argued that the need for more segregated space in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was at least in part the product of new activities made possible as labour was freed from subsistence; ‘reading, writing, music, fancy needlework, pursuit of scientific hobbies and the entertainment of friends’ all demanded space away from other activities.⁷⁰ The relationship between the spatial atomization of the dwelling place and a desire for ‘privacy’ as individual and familial withdrawal is certainly not self-evident. Eleanor John found that the upstairs ‘Great Chamber’ (whose development, as we will see in chapter two, is typically associated with the ‘privatisation of sleep’) retained the social function of the hall well into the eighteenth century, albeit with greater exclusivity.⁷¹ Similarly, Lawrence Stone

⁶⁶ Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 77.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.80, p. 208.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁶⁹ L. Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London*, (New York, 2007), p. 102-105, p. 108.

⁷⁰ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 362.

⁷¹ E. John, ‘At Home with the London Middling Sort – The Inventory Evidence for Furnishings and Room Use, 1570-1720’, *Regional Furniture Society*, No. 22, (2008), pp. 27-51. On the sociability of early modern beds see L. Gowing, “‘The Twinkling of a Bedstaff’: Recovering the Social Life of English Beds 1500-1700”, *Home Cultures*, Vol. 11, Issue 3, (2014), pp. 278-279. For ‘privatisation of

acknowledged that servants were ever-present throughout the house, and that they were ‘constantly entering bedrooms and *private* apartments’ opening shutters and lighting fires, bringing breakfast, dressing their masters and mistresses, removing chamber pots, bringing tea, and lighting candles.⁷² As Orlin suggested ‘[p]rivacy was not as ruling a motivation for the architectural innovations of the Great Rebuilding as has long been imagined, and not as dominant an effect’.⁷³ This thesis adds to arguments which suggest that the architectural form of the domestic space was more complex than a unilateral advance towards the segregation of servants and family, and was not governed only by the desire for privacy.

The meanings of privacy itself have recently been the subject of analysis. Rather than being understood as a fundamental human desire (or, in the terminology of the growing legal literature on the subject, a human ‘right’), a variety of meanings have been advanced.⁷⁴ Lena Orlin demonstrated that in sixteenth and seventeenth-century London, privacy might take the form of ‘interiority, atomization, spatial control, intimacy, urban anonymity, secrecy, withholding, solitude’, and drew attention to the negative connotations of the physical apartness associated with it. As Orlin suggested, privacy might involve ‘not intellectual autonomy’ but a ‘treacherous desire for secrecy’ and the ‘disruptions of community and interruptions of social knowledge’.⁷⁵ The juncture between the individual and the social are a key component of ‘private’ space, and was problematic for a society in which communal control and the socially-prescribed hierarchy structured social existence. Patricia Meyer Spacks similarly outlined the ‘ambivalence and ambiguity’ of privacy in the eighteenth century, and challenged the ‘powerful positive valence’ associated with England’s identification as the ‘birthplace of privacy’.⁷⁶ Physical and psychological separateness were dangerous in the eighteenth century; ‘connected with secrecy and with performance, as well as with seclusion, the very idea of privacy could arouse fear’.⁷⁷ Although anxiety provoking, what Spacks called ‘psychological’ privacy

sleep’ see T. Crook, ‘Norms, Forms and Beds: Spatializing Sleep in Victorian Britain’, *Body & Society*, Vol. 14, No. 4, (2008), p. 17. Also see chapter two, esp. pp. 114-116.

⁷² Stone, *Broken Lives*, p. 212.

⁷³ Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, p. 5.

⁷⁴ On this see J. Inness, *Privacy, Intimacy and Isolation*, (Oxford, 1996); P. M. Spacks, *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self*, (London, 2003), p. 2.

⁷⁵ Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, p.1, p. 3.

⁷⁶ Spacks, *Privacy*, p. 7, p. 3; P. Ariès, ‘Introduction’, in R. Chartier, (ed.), *A History of Private Life*, Vol. 3, *Passions of the Renaissance*, A. Goldhammer, trans., (Cambridge, MA, 1989), p. 5.

⁷⁷ Spacks, *Privacy*, p. 5, p. 15.

could also have positive attributes. Privacy was related to all the ideas about authenticity, self-discovery, individual autonomy, and moral and religious reflection that were celebrated in the eighteenth century. Importantly, the meaning of both physical and psychological privacy was socially constructed; if privacy was celebrated for some, it was dangerous for others - notably women and young people – who, as we have seen, constituted the majority of servants in this period.⁷⁸ The complex meanings of the possibility of physical withdrawal for servant maids is explored in further detail in chapter two.

Spacks argued that physical privacy was not a key concern of eighteenth century authors. This, she suggested, was perhaps because they ‘assume the impossibility of physical privacy; perhaps they feel no need for it; perhaps they considered it a matter too trivial for discussion’.⁷⁹ Since Spacks’ influential work, a more nuanced and multi-scalar approach to physical withdrawal has been adopted. Laura Gowing, for example, revealed a variety of behavioural practices through which physical privacy (or at least self-containment) might be attained in crowded locations. Even in the same bed, the rearrangement of bedcovers or ‘lying at someone’s back’ might allow for what Gowing called ‘protean’ privacy.⁸⁰ Orlin too argued that temporal as much as spatial privacy might govern domestic behaviour, and that, for most individuals, ‘privacy was less a material condition than a consensual act’.⁸¹ The material (rather than architectural) aspect of privacy has also been the subject of some study. In Jennifer Melville’s thesis on the use and organisation of domestic space in seventeenth-century London, for example, she suggested that we should expand our understanding of privacy to include the concealment and security of goods, for, as Orest Ranum suggested: ‘the man who possessed a locked casket may have enjoyed the same level of privacy as the man who owned a vast house’.⁸² Amanda Vickery has since demonstrated that the locked box played an important role in private life in the eighteenth century; for Vickery, the box was the ‘lowest common denominator’ of personhood, the removal of which was a punishment exacted only against those

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5, p. 27.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸⁰ Gowing, ‘Twinkling’, p. 296-7.

⁸¹ Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, p. 173.

⁸² J. Melville, *The Use and Organisation of Domestic Space in Late Seventeenth-Century London*, PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, (1999), esp. p. 137, p. 158.

who had grossly subverted communal norms.⁸³ It is control over space that is understood to be significant here, and is recognised to mark out the changing boundaries between individuals. The influence of these ideas will become particularly apparent in chapter three, which is partly concerned with the extent to which access to servants' boxes reveals the boundaries between different individuals. Although this thesis is heavily indebted to this work, it also suggests that scholarship on the eighteenth-century domestic space has focused on privacy to the detriment of other interpretive frameworks. Although we might conceive of the control over space identified in chapters two and three as 'privacy' this was not the way in which it was expressed by contemporaries, at least not in the sources consulted for this thesis.⁸⁴ This thesis suggests that it is only by moving beyond privacy that we can understand a fuller meaning of the domestic space— not only for servants, but for other members of the household too.⁸⁵

The spatial turn

The 'spatial turn' has encouraged thinking more deeply about the experience of particular spaces. Historians are increasingly employing space as an analytical category through which a variety of historical phenomenon might be mapped and understood. It is well known that the spatial organisation of society is integral to the production and reproduction of that society, and that 'space reflects social organisation'.⁸⁶ The spatial organisation of the domestic space is typically understood in this context, as a reflection of hierarchically structured society, and a way in which the status quo was replicated and reproduced in everyday life. On the rare occasions in which servants' experiences of the domestic space are taken into consideration, research tends to focus on the lack of control servants had over the space of the house. It is the vulnerabilities of servants to eviction from the house, and their lack of power and control over the domestic space that has been a consistent theme of the literature. Amanda Flather, for example, suggested that the lack of spatial autonomy servants had within the household meant that they 'often

⁸³ Vickery, 'Englishman's Home', p. 173.

⁸⁴ See Spacks, *Privacy*, p. 24.

⁸⁵ See Hamlett, *Material Relations*, esp. pp. 4-5, pp. 22-79, for servants see pp. 51-60.

⁸⁶ On this, see, for example, S. Ardener, *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps*, (Oxford, 1993); Flather, *Gender and Space*; D. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, (Minneapolis, 1994), quotation p. 4.

experienced their own domestic spaces as arenas of direct power'.⁸⁷ Certainly, the relationship of servants to the space of the house was mediated through the person of the master and/or mistress. Melville's research demonstrated that servants in the seventeenth century typically referred to the house in which they lived through a possessive pronoun which identified it with their master or mistress; the house was referred to 'my master's house' or 'my mistress's house'.⁸⁸ The ultimate authority over the domicile rested with the master and/ or mistress of the household and servants could be thrown out of the house for misbehaviour, and could also be 'confined' to their rooms or other domestic spaces – usually as a punishment.⁸⁹ Other spatial practices, as we have seen, marked out the subordination of servants within the household; speech acts, domestic tasks, and a whole host of spatially-significant performances and behaviours served to reiterate and reinforce the power of the master and/ or mistress over the space of the house and the person of the servant. Within the household, servants are thought to have been incarcerated. Bridget Hill suggested that eighteenth-century servants were 'often virtually cut off from contact with the world outside' and Leonore Davidoff that Victorian households were 'isolated settings' which 'made English domestic service extremely confining'.⁹⁰ It is clear from the records of cruelty brought before the court that domestic spaces *could* be experienced as site of incarceration, and service as a period of unwanted regulation, restriction, and brutality.⁹¹ That servants (and particularly female servants) were expected to be found within the walls of the house is also suggested by newspaper advertisements which suggest that individuals applying for particular places 'must bear confinement'.⁹² Although the extent of servants' vulnerabilities

⁸⁷ Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 47. Also see R.C. Richardson, *Household Servants in Early Modern England*, (Manchester, 2010), p. 98.

⁸⁸ Melville, *Use and Organisation of Domestic Space*, pp. 97- 98.

⁸⁹ On the mistress's power over the keys to the door see Vickery, 'Englishman's Home', p. 162; Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 45-6.

⁹⁰ Hill, *Servants*, p. 19. Also see Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics*, p. 127; L. Davidoff, 'Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England', *JSH*, Vol. 7, Issue 4, (1974), pp. 408-409.

⁹¹ See, for example, *OBP*, September 1767, trial of Elizabeth Brownrigg, James Brownrigg, (t17670909-1).

⁹² See for example: 'WANTED in a genteel regular family, where a man servant is kept, a clever woman servant of all work, who can cook plain victuals extremely well. She must have an unexceptionable character, bear confinement, and have no followers', *World and Fashionable Advertiser*, (London, Saturday March 17, 1787), Issue 6; 'WANTED for a very small Family, a cleanly, honest, sober, young Woman, not under 25 Years of Age...she must know how to cook plain Things well, and Needlework will be required...must bear Confinement as she will be very much with her Mistress, therefore must not have many Followers', *Public Advertiser*, (London, Saturday May 10, 1764), Issue 9158. For arguments about early modern servants and their place 'outside' see A.

within the households in which they lived and work should not be underestimated, it is an argument of this thesis that although a significance site of social interaction and subordination, servants did not experience the domestic space simply as an arena of ‘direct power’.⁹³

A variety of factors might influence servants’ experiences of particular domestic spaces. The location of the household might alter the experience of it; country houses might be ‘isolated settings’, but smaller trading or retail households in the cramped metropolis were anything but.⁹⁴ The extent to which households were experienced as ‘arenas of direct power’ was also related to the extent to which the servant relied on their place within it. The possibility of fleeing a place depended on a variety of factors, not least the willingness of servants’ masters or (more usually) mistresses to provide a ‘character’. How sensible it was to leave the house also depended on whether the individual had anywhere else to go. Servants with family and friends in the capital were clearly at an advantage here, as were those who were savvy savers, or had masters or mistresses who bucked the trend and paid wages in weekly or monthly instalments rather than waiting until the end of the term of service.⁹⁵ There was an important gendered dimension to this too. The reliance on a character was more acute for female servants who had less recourse to other occupations than their male counterparts. Arguably, female servants were also more dependent on the house in which they served than their male peers; the reputation of young female servants demanded that they not spend a night camped out on the doorstep or at a public house, as male servants appear to have done fairly frequently.⁹⁶ Importantly, reliance on service, and therefore, the experience of the house, was also related to broader swings in the economy; leaving a place when the price of bread and rents were high – as they were in the 1790s- might have seemed inconceivable to a poor servant girl whose wages were tied up in the household economy and who was acutely aware

Kussmaul, *Servants in Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge, 1981); C. Mansell, *A New History of Female Service in Early Modern England, 1550-1650*, PhD thesis, University of Exeter, (forthcoming).

⁹³ Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 47.

⁹⁴ For an alternative view of the country house as ‘isolating setting’ see H. Wallace, *Community, Conflict and Change at Chatsworth, 1700-1820*, PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, (forthcoming).

⁹⁵ On wages See Hecht, *Domestic Servant Class*, pp. 141-153; Field, J., ‘Domestic Service, Gender, and Wages in Rural England, c.1700-1860’, *EHR*, Vol. 66, No. 1, (2013), pp. 249-272.

⁹⁶ See, for example, *OBP*, April 1732, trial of Dorothy Fosset (t17320419-8).

that their meagre wages would provide little in the way of shelter and subsistence.⁹⁷ The relationship of servants to the domestic space was not governed solely by their subordinate position within the household, but was influenced by a number of other factors.

Rather than particular spaces being read simply as reflections of the social hierarchy, constructed from the dictates of the powerful, scholars have recognised that the meaning of specific places could be ‘transformed’ by social actors ‘who constitute it through everyday use’.⁹⁸ If the ‘spatial turn’ is a relatively recent phenomenon in the discipline of history, its theoretical underpinnings are of a much earlier vintage. In one of the most famous formulations of this approach, Henri Lefebvre argued for the *Production of Space* through human action and reaction. Rather than an empty container in which social action took place, Lefebvre argued that physical space was indivisible from mental and social space. Although he recognised that the ‘official’ modes of spatial production were used to enforce relations of domination, he allowed for other meanings produced through the ‘appropriation’ of ‘lived space’.⁹⁹ If Lefebvre was interested in the mechanisms through which power and domination were constructed through space, Michel de Certeau focused on the resistances of the everyday. De Certeau’s most famous essay ‘Walking in the City’ posited everyday actors as ‘*bricoleurs*’ whose practices not only served to ‘affirm’ the ‘possibilities of space organised by the spatial order’, but also ‘make innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules’.¹⁰⁰ In De Certeau’s work, everyday movement (like walking) left traces in the environment, and offered evidence of presence and disruption in space typically resigned to insignificance. Some of these ‘*quotidien*’ domestic practices will be returned to in chapter four, but the resistances of servants to the spatial orderings of the domestic space might be understood in this context. One servant, for example, was described by a footman in the same house as

⁹⁷ Mary Ann Ashford understood her own experience of service within a broader economic context. She told her readers: ‘I should have said before, that I entered service when all sorts of provisions were exorbitantly dear: bread was above two shillings the quartern loaf, and everything else dear in proportion: potatoes were for three-halfpence to two-pence to two-pence a-pound; and I was fortunate to get where I have plenty of all things needful’, M. A. Ashford, *Life of a Licensed Victualler’s Daughter, Written by Herself*, (London, 1844), pp. 23-24.

⁹⁸ Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 2.

⁹⁹ H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 1974, trans. D. Nicholson Smith, 1991, (Oxford, 1991).

¹⁰⁰ M. d. Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Rendall, 1984, (London, 1988), p. xiv.

walking ‘up the great stairs more like a master than a servant and not up the back stairs as the rest of the servants generally did’.¹⁰¹ This example suggests not only the ‘lack of correspondence between the clean lines of design and the blurred shades of habitation’ outlined by Meldrum, but that servants might re-constitute, re-interpret and ‘produce’ their own meanings of particular spaces within the house.¹⁰² These theories make it possible to imagine the everyday spatiality of servants’ lives loosened from the assumptions and expectations of their masters and mistresses, and make ‘space’ for servants within the histories of the households in which they lived and worked.

If these spatial ideas have typically been explored on the scale of the city or street, more recent work has drawn attention to the ‘geographies of home’.¹⁰³ Doreen Massey’s famous statement that ‘homes have a power geometry whereby people are differently positioned in relation to and differently experience, a place called home’ can be understood as a rallying cry for ‘critical geographies of home’, although, as we have seen, the language and connotations of ‘home’ are not always useful in the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁴ Massey, like Lefebvre and De Certeau argued that space is ‘inherently dynamic’, an ‘ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification’.¹⁰⁵ If, for Lefebvre and De Certeau, contests over the meaning of space were constructed as a binary between the ‘official’ strategies (typically of the state) and the ‘everyday’ tactics (or resistance) of ‘the people’, the work of feminist geographers like Massey (and, more recently, of scholars interested in the geographies and spatial imaginaries of BME and LGBTQ communities) has demonstrated that spatial encounters are infinitely more complex and multi-faceted than these theorists supposed.¹⁰⁶ The dichotomy between an ‘official’ spatial ‘strategy’ adopted by master and/or mistress and the everyday practices or ‘tactics’ of servant flattens the range of social identities that existed and operated within households in eighteenth-century London, and does not do justice to the complexity of individual relationships found within it. Eighteenth-century households were

¹⁰¹ Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 80.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁰³ Also see Blunt and Dowling, *Home*, esp. p. 16.

¹⁰⁴ Massey, ‘A Place Called Home’, pp. 157-174.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7, p. 2, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, D. Bell and G. Valentine, *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*, (London and New York, 1995); R. Aldrich, ‘Homosexuality and the City: An Historical Overview’, *Urban Studies*, Vol., 41, Issue 9, (2004), pp. 1719-1737; L. Kennedy, *Race and Urban Space in Contemporary American Culture*, (Edinburgh, 2000).

complex social units constituted not only of the marital couple (themselves distinguished by gender, age, and sometimes, by social status too), but of lodgers, children, and an array of servants, apprentices, shopmen and women, and other family members and visitors who related to each other and to the space of the house in different ways. Servants' experiences of their places were influenced by the presence of other individuals; semi-independent relationships could be struck with lodgers, children, and other servants – all of which might fundamentally alter the experience of and relationship to the household in which they lived and worked. Although there is a general consensus that the social distance between servant and master was growing in this period, even this is difficult to chart, and varied between households, as well as by geography. Sian Pooley's analysis of the census information in Lancaster, for example, queried the assumed dichotomy between socio-economic backgrounds of masters and servants by the nineteenth century. Pooley's comparison revealed that the employers of servants were more likely to be engaged in higher-status occupations, in a profession or in white-collar employment than the parents of servants, who were more likely to be employed in skilled or semi-skilled manual labour, but that the overlap between the two groups was significant – at least in the Lancashire town analysed by her.¹⁰⁷ Much, it appears, depended on the personal relationships between individual household members and on a whole host of domestic considerations.

Particularly helpful in imagining the manner in which servants learned to understand and inhabit their 'place' within the domestic space has been Pierre Bourdieu's understanding of the manner in which 'social space' was constituted through relationships of difference not between an 'official' hegemony and a culture of resistance, but according to a constellation of the economic, social and cultural 'capital' of the individual. For Bourdieu, this capital was transformed into the 'habitus', or a way of being in space. The concept of habitus recognises not only that different individuals have access to different forms of capital, but that the value of

¹⁰⁷ S. Pooley, 'Domestic Servants and Their Urban Employers: A Case Study of Lancaster 1880-1914', *EHR*, Vol. 62, Issue 2, (2009), pp. 405-29, esp. pp. 406-7. For similar conclusions see E. Higgs, 'The Tabulation of Occupations in the Nineteenth-Century Census, with Special Reference to Domestic Servants', *Local Population Studies*, CCVIII, (1982), pp. 58-66 and D. Cooper and M. Donald, 'Households and "Hidden" Kin in Early Nineteenth-Century England: Four Case Studies in Suburban Exeter, 1821-1861', *C&C*, Vol. 10, Issue 2, (1995), pp. 257-278.

such capital is judged according to the norms of a particular field of action.¹⁰⁸

Firmly located within structures of social, political, and economic inequality that limited access to capital of all types, servants had limited (but not non-existent) power to influence the social scripts (which Bourdieu called ‘doxa’) that dictated the rules of the game, and the acceptable codes of behaviour within a particular space. This seems particularly significant in a society in which Providence was thought to explain and make sense of the allocation of capital. If we are to imagine the domestic space in which servants lived and worked as a particular field of action, the rules of the game and the expectations of their behaviour in it were typically written by their masters and mistresses. This is not to suggest that action was predetermined by the doxa, but to recognise the difficulties for servants of conducting legitimate action which diverged from these expectations.

If the habitus influenced attitudes towards the domestic space *in toto*, so too might it affect the experience of particular rooms. Particular domestic spaces demanded different modes of behaviour and suggest that the expectations and behaviours of servants altered as they travelled throughout the house. The first part of this thesis focuses on the spaces of kitchen and garret on the basis that the particular social scripts, the doxa, that governed these spaces differed from elsewhere. Although rules, regulations and domestic expectations differed according to household size and structure, servants’ access to particular rooms and particular items might be curtailed and closely monitored. Servant access to particular spaces – notably the parlour and the bedchamber – might have been limited to their ‘business’, and might, at other times, be highly suspect.¹⁰⁹ If these rules were occasionally made explicit in household advice literature and in the instructions that servants received when joining the household, they were probably also implicit in the décor and layout of particular domestic spaces.¹¹⁰ Much, again, depended on circumstance. An invitation to sit and eat or converse with the family in the parlour might be the norm in smaller households, but was experienced by others as a ‘favour’, a reward for good behaviour, and a marker of their integration into the family and the respectability

¹⁰⁸ P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans, Richard Nice, 1977, (Cambridge 1995).

¹⁰⁹ Ann Bayne, who was a ladies maid to a widow who lived on Clifford Street, for example, told the court that a stolen box was ‘not in my lady’s bedroom, and I had no business in that room, but when I went on messages’, *OBP*, September 1799, trial of Robert Classon, Thomas Whittocks, (t17990911-16). On this see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 85.

¹¹⁰ See D. Wood and R. Beck, *Home Rules*, (London, 1994).

represented by it.¹¹¹ Yet a summons to the parlour through the ring of a bell, the stamp of a foot, or a knock on the wainscot, had different implications.¹¹² If they were called to refill the kettle, stoke the fire, or go on an errand, this ‘invitation’ was probably understood as a response to their domestic role and responsibilities. The focus on everyday practices such as these offers a more democratic perspective of the domestic space which takes account of all its inhabitants, but also implicates servants in the making and re-making of the domestic life. If thinking spatially allows the agency of servants to be revealed, this should not be equated simply with resistance. If the habitus influenced disposition in space, an individual’s agency might be conceived as the ‘capacity for action’ which might make itself known as much in agreement and complicity with the spatial arrangements and the appropriation of spatial codes and behaviour, as in resistance to it.¹¹³

Although research on present-day domestic workers has suggested just how differently the space of the house is experienced by family members and employees, the experience of eighteenth-century domestics continues to be read largely through the accounts of their masters and mistresses.¹¹⁴ If scholars have suggested that our ways of being and understanding space are fundamentally affected by individual habitus, the difference between the descriptions of servants’ place within the household as told by their masters and mistresses, and those of servants themselves appears clear enough. The abundance of material that appeared over the course of the eighteenth century that ‘dealt’ in some way with the domestic space, might be understood as one manifestation of the attempt to secure the identity and stabilise the meaning of the household against the ‘unutterable mobility and contingency’ of space.¹¹⁵ The story we are told in the sources is one account of the domestic space, an account governed by cultural capital of masters and mistresses, and their power to

¹¹¹ Joshua Dixon, who was an apprentice to an apothecary in eighteenth-century Liverpool, complained in a letter to his mother that he had ‘Not...spent an Hour (except Twice) in the Parlour – excluding I Dine there – Nor as yet Tasted Tea in his House since my Arrival’, and later, proudly, communicated that his master ‘drank to my good Health and order’d me a Glass of Ale –deferring my removal [from the parlour] to a considerable Time. A Favour never before Experienced’, Barker and Hamlett, ‘Living above the Shop’, pp. 317-318.

¹¹² For knocking with a foot see *OBP*, May 1785, trial of Maria Theresa Philpoe, (t17850520-27).

¹¹³ See S. Mahmood, ‘Feminist Theory, Embodiment and the Docile Agency: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival’, *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 16. Issue 2 (2001), p. 210. Thanks to Karin Hassan Jansson for this reference.

¹¹⁴ See for example, R. Cox and R. Narula, ‘Playing Happy Families: Rules and Relationships in Au Pair Employing Households in London, England’, *Gender, Place and Culture*, Vol. 10, No. 4, (2003), pp. 333-344; Búriková, ‘The Embarrassment of Co-Presence’.

¹¹⁵ Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, p. 5.

decide the meaning of the households they inhabit. How, then, might we access the domestic space from the point-of-view of the servants?

Methodology

The study of domestic servants is typically constructed in terms of methodological difficulty. Servants are understood to be ‘ubiquitous’ in eighteenth-century London, but ‘invisible’ in the historical record.¹¹⁶ Tim Meldrum, for example, lamented ‘the historiographical gloom’ which ‘one expects when the lives and experiences of a subordinate group are described and judged... by their employers’.¹¹⁷ Both servants and the spaces they inhabited are concealed from the historian by the source material available. Servants leave few records of their domestic encounters. Their presence is concealed in the traditional sources through which we access the eighteenth-century domestic space. Servants are skipped-over in travelogues written by visitors to the capital, concealed beneath generic accounts of the ‘English’ way. Hard domestic labours are rarely mentioned in the letters and diaries penned by genteel ladies and gentlemen which tend to perpetuate the ideology which dictated that good household management was characterised by its invisibility and by the mistress’s ‘sleight of hand’.¹¹⁸ The work of the house was increasingly antithetical to the new ideas of domesticity outlined above, and these sources offer a carefully curated view of the eighteenth-century domestic space stripped of its association with service and toil. The gloss of domestic neatness and order has concealed the activities of servants from the historian; the desire to uphold the myth of domestic ease has succeeded in blinding us to the realities of contemporary practice. As Emily Cockayne has suggested, the ‘unseemly’ aspects of eighteenth century life have gone unnoticed beneath ‘the pleasures of the period’.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Kent, ‘Ubiquitous but Invisible’, p. 111.

¹¹⁷ T. Meldrum, ‘London Domestic Servants from Depositional Evidence, 1660-1750: Servant-Employer Sexuality in the Patriarchal Household’, in T. Hitchcock, P. King and P. Sharpe (eds), *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840*, (Basingstoke, 1997), p. 48. Also see Steedman, *Master and Servant*, esp. p. 13.

¹¹⁸ Vickery, *Gentleman’s Daughter*, p. 131.

¹¹⁹ See E. Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise and Stench in England*, (New Haven and London, 2007), p. 1. For similar criticism see J. Batchelor, *Women’s Work, Labour, Gender, Authorship, 1750-1830*, (Manchester, 2014), p. 13; L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1750*, 1988 (London, 1996), p.139; Vickery, *Gentleman’s Daughter*, p. 131.

It is an argument of this thesis that the domestic space and its material environment offer an insight into service missing from other records, and that by thinking-through servants' engagement with these objects and spaces, new insights into the lives of these individuals can be explored. If the domestic space has been implicated in the narratives of the growing distance between servant and employer (typically around the 'privacy' of the latter), the material environment itself has recently been recognised as offering evidence of servants' presence within domestic space; a material residue of their long-standing interaction with it that is visible to those who search for it. Marla Miller has described the 'chills' she felt when confronted with a sooty stain on an attic wall at Lindenwald-the Kinderhook in New York and a darkened baseboard of a frequently mopped floor at the Porter Phelps Huntington House in Hadley Massachusetts. These were, for Miller, 'the few physical traces that remain' of servants lives on the large American estates.¹²⁰ These traces, like the 'signs' that haunt the city in De Certeau's work, offer evidence of an alternative spatial reality, a reality which does not conform to the domestic life contained in much of the source material. Similar signs of wear are evident in large properties in this country, although, like those in the US, these are usually preserved through neglect. In the medieval kitchens at Haddon Hall, for example, the wooden work surface is visibly worn from hundreds of years of everyday use; one bowl-shaped depression is so deep that a hole has been forged through the hard wood and the flag-stoned floor has become visible underneath. The hurried tread of centuries of service has also furrowed a contour into the stone step from the main kitchen space to the bake house at the same house. These signs of wear are all that remain of the servants habitual encounters with the objects in that space, and are rare – even in large households. For the smaller households under consideration here it is necessary to look to other sources. If some indication of the realities of domestic life can be read from the fabric of the building, material evidence of the smallest households is generally lacking. Peter Guillery noted that these structures were often 'too ephemeral to have left any evidence for empirical study'. His alliterative assertion that 'not a splinter of seventeenth-century Shadwell survives' conveys the utter

¹²⁰ M. Miller, 'Learning to Look: Built Environment as Sources of Insight on Women's Work' <<https://workandgender.wordpress.com/2015/05/08/learning-to-look-built-environments-as-sources-of-insight-on-womens-work/>> accessed 8th July 2016.

destruction that has befallen much of the vernacular architecture from this period.¹²¹ This is particularly the case in London where consistent over-crowding led to constant re-building and slum clearance in the nineteenth century. Guillery's study of the small house in eighteenth-century London is dependent on the archaeological evidence uncovered at the beginning of the twentieth century; although Guillery has used these and other records to provide fascinating case studies of the small workshops, trade houses and cottages in the metropolis during the eighteenth century, this type of in-depth archaeological investigation is beyond the scope of this study.¹²²

Although the domestic space is constituted partly from the built environment, it is also constructed from the material worlds that circulated within it. Although studies of architecture, the built environment and interior design have tended to remain separate from studies of material culture (at least in this country), the focus on space brings these literatures together. Like the histories on space, recent work on material culture has moved away from uniform understanding of 'things' (typically as goods in commodity exchange or consumption practices) towards a more democratic, everyday approach.¹²³ This thesis adds to this understanding of the material world by approaching the domestic space and its material culture through the eyes (and hands) of servants. The Geffrye's collection has offered an access-point into the material world of the households in which servants lived and worked, although because attributing provenance, meaning and use of objects is difficult, it is tricky to 'match' these items to specific households. Although items from the Geffrye's collection have been instrumental in thinking-through the relationship between servants and the domestic space, without the expertise and funding for thorough material analysis and conservation, they have been used more to provoke discussion than as source material.

¹²¹ P. Guillery, *The Small House in Eighteenth-Century London: A Social and Architectural History*, (London, 2004), p. 4, p. 16.

¹²² On the possibilities of archaeological evidence see A. Owens, N. Jeffries, K. Wehner and R. Featherby, 'Fragments of the Modern City: Material Culture and the Rhythms of Everyday Life in Victorian London', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (2010), pp. 212-225.

¹²³ See, for example, T. Hamling and C. Richardson, (eds), *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, (Farnham, 2010).

Whilst extant material evidence of domestic life below the level of the elite is rare and difficult to interpret, textual records of objects that formed a part of the material world that servants inhabited do survive. My understanding of the domestic space has been informed by a sample of inventories collated and transcribed by researchers at the Geffrye Museum. The inventories were selected and compiled by Jane Hamlett as part of the redisplay of the Geffrye's galleries, and full transcriptions of these documents were made by Laurie Lindey with additions from Zoe Hudson.¹²⁴ This sample has been invaluable, not only because transcription has increased the number of documents it has been possible to consult, but because the inventories were pre-selected to align with the Geffrye's interpretive remit of 'middling' metropolitan houses, which, as we have seen, was where the majority of servants were employed. For the period 1740-1800 the sample includes 41 inventories of a variety of Londoners from the 'middling sort'. Although I refer to these records throughout the thesis as 'inventories', the sample is comprised of a variety of documents, which were produced under different circumstances. The majority of the inventories were probate documents exhibited or disputed before the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. This court was the archbishop of Canterbury's court and had sole jurisdiction over probate (or the proving of a will) for those whose goods were valued at £5 (or £10 in the City of London) and were held in more than one diocese.¹²⁵ Although, as many scholars have suggested, the probate inventory was a 'system in transition', and declined absolutely in most areas after around 1720, this court was an anomaly, and business continued even as it contracted elsewhere.¹²⁶ The other type of inventory which appeared frequently in the sample are those collected as evidence in cases heard in a variety of equity courts which heard disputes over inheritance and wills,

¹²⁴ The inventories were gathered between 2004 and 2006 and were transcribed between 2010 and 2012. For an outline of an inventory sample see appendix 1.

¹²⁵ For information on jurisdiction see the guide to probate records authored by Guildhall Library <<http://www.history.ac.uk/gh/probate.html>>. Also see J. Hoskins and N. Cox, 'Probate 1500-1800: A System in Transition' in T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose (eds), *When Death Do Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, (Oxford, 2000), esp. pp. 15-19.

¹²⁶ See Hoskins and Cox, 'A System in Transition', esp. p. 27. For an explanation of change which sets the decline in the context of changing material world see G. Riello, 'Things Seen and Unseen': The Material Culture of Early Modern Inventories and Their Representation of Domestic Interiors', in P. Finden (ed), *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500- 1800*, (London, 2013), pp. 140-144. The extent to which the eighteenth century saw the end of what Riello called the practice of 'inventorying' has since been challenged. For examples of nineteenth-century inventories see Barker and Hamlett, 'Living above the Shop', pp. 313-314 and L. Hoskins, *Reading the Inventory: Household Goods, Domestic Cultures and Difference in England and Wales, 1841 – 81*, PhD thesis, QMUL, 2011, esp. p. 11, pp. 13-14, and *passim*.

lands, trusts, debts and marriage settlements, amongst other things. The most numerous of these records appeared before the Court of Chancery, but examples from the Supreme Court of Judicature and the Records of the Exchequer also appear in the sample.¹²⁷ In the case of the Chancery, probate inventories and wills, manuscript inventories and catalogues of house sales were compiled and collected for the purpose of investigating the dispute. Because these documents appeared as ‘evidence’ and were not filed with the associated suit, deciphering the cause and outcome of the dispute is difficult and has not been pursued here.

The methodological challenges of probate inventories have been examined extensively.¹²⁸ As a record of property ownership, and in accordance to the laws of coverture, inventories were typically completed only for men, or single (usually widowed) women.¹²⁹ The precise socio-economic boundaries of the probate system have also been extensively discussed, with some consensus that only around 10-40 per cent of the men in England drew up an inventory as part of their will, with considerable geographical variation and change over time.¹³⁰ Although the variety of cases which appeared before the equity courts meant that, on occasion, an inventory was taken of a household much further down the social scale, in general these courts too dealt only with those of sufficient means to bring a case before the court.¹³¹ Although the social bias of these documents is a significant issue for scholars interested in the living arrangements of the labouring population and working class, this is less of a problem for servants. Rather than interpreting the material worlds revealed in inventories as property belonging to the deceased, this thesis suggests that these records also offer evidence of the experience of servants of the households

¹²⁷ There is also one example from the Orphans’ Courts and one from a personal collection. On the Orphans’ Court see Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 347 (footnote 61), p. 391 (footnote 24), and pp. 394-5. See appendix 1.

¹²⁸ See, for example, Overton, M., J. Whittle, D. Dean and A. Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750*, (London, 2004), pp. 13-29; Arkell, Evans and Good, *When Death Do Us Part*; Riello, ‘Things Seen and Unseen’; J. Bedell, ‘Archaeology and Probate Inventories in the Study of Eighteenth-Century life’, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 31, No. 2, (2000), pp. 223-245.

¹²⁹ There were only two inventories from the sample that were taken of women’s property. See appendix 1.

¹³⁰ Riello, ‘Things Seen and Unseen’, p. 136. Also see Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, pp. 208-213. For an exception see P. King, ‘Pauper Inventories and the Material Lives of the Poor in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Centuries’, in Hitchcock, King and Sharpe, *Chronicling Poverty*, pp. 155-191; J. Harley, ‘Material Lives of the Poor and Their Strategic Use of the Workhouse During the Final Decades of the English Old Poor Law’, *C&C*, Vol. 30, Issue 1, (2015), pp. 71. 103.

¹³¹ On the limited social reach of Chancery in the seventeenth century see Hoskins and Cox, ‘A System in Transition’, p. 27.

in which they lived and laboured – although, it must be said, that the very smallest households in which servants lived probably do not appear in these sources.

There are a number of methodological challenges common to the inventories which are worth considering here. Most importantly, these records preserve a static description of goods within the house made by an appraiser whose motives do not tally with those of the historian. Inventories have been an important (if problematic) source for architectural scholars and those interested in the history of the built environment.¹³² It is not only that appraisers might move from room to room without mentioning it in their accounts, but that rooms without goods valuable enough to be included in the inventory, or without objects owned by the deceased, were not typically catalogued.¹³³ If the record itself might on occasion be a poor (or at least partial) reflection of the domestic environment, at other times the domestic environment that it recorded was hardly a typical arrangement. The re-arrangement and dismantling of the house to assist in the process of the inventory and the transferral of property appears particularly troubling, especially for those documents which record goods for the purposes of the sale of household goods. An inventory of household furniture belonging to one ‘Mr Webb’, for example, appeared as evidence in a dispute which was heard before the Court of Chancery.¹³⁴ Rather than being documented within the house in which the deceased have lived, these goods had been ‘removed by Order of the Executor’ to a household which was a ‘more convenient place of Sale’. Unusual domestic arrangements might be explained by practices such as this. It is probably for this reason that a variety of bed linen belonging to John Crich was listed as located in the ‘back kitchen’, for example.¹³⁵ The inventory suggests it was taken not of the goods in situ, but once they had arrived at the house of his executor. As a record of financial value, inventories are also only a partial record. The bias of probate inventories towards valuable moveable property is well

¹³² For examples of work which used inventories to trace changes in domestic layout see C., Shammas, ‘The Domestic Environment in Early Modern England and America’, *JSH*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (1980), esp. p. 5; R. Priestly and P. J. Corfield, ‘Rooms and Room Use in Norwich Housing, 1580 - 1730’, *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, Vol. 16, (1982), pp. 93-123; F. E. Brown, ‘Continuity and Change in the Urban House: Developments in Domestic Space Organisation in Seventeenth-Century London’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 28, No.3, (1986), pp. 558-590, Overton et al, *Production and Consumption*, p. 15, pp. 121- 136.

¹³³ Overton et al, *Production and Consumption*, p. 15, p. 121.

¹³⁴ Mr Webb, 1792, C108/285, NA, GM transcript.

¹³⁵ John Crich, 1741, C104/204, NA, GM transcript.

known, although it was not uniformly the case that goods of little value were omitted from these records.¹³⁶ The most valuable, or at least, emotionally ‘rich’ objects may also have been removed from the household, or bequeathed to other members by the time of the arrival of the appraiser.¹³⁷ This was, perhaps, particularly significant for the inventories of women who, scholars have shown, were more likely to bequeath household stuff.¹³⁸ The probate inventory of the widow Elizabeth Sowton, for example, records that the executor had ‘disposed’ of a variety of clothing and an ironing cloth to the nurse, maid, and to the ‘woman that lay the deceased out’ before the appraisers arrived.¹³⁹ Material absences might also have been prevalent in the inventories which appeared before the equity courts; it was probably in the best interests of the executors or debtors to conceal goods from the appraisers, or to undervalue them. Conversely, the catalogues of house sales acted as a form of advertising, and may have overstated or overvalued items that were listed within the house. It is hardly surprising that a ‘four post bedstead & old blue Cheney furniture’ which was listed in the manuscript inventory of William Armroid’s house near Great Tower Hill, became a ‘4 post bedstead and blue cheney furniture’ in the sales catalogue, nor that the chamber pot, bedpan and ‘stone jar’ listed in the back bedroom in the inventory do not feature in the catalogue.¹⁴⁰ These limitations notwithstanding, these records provide invaluable evidence of a variety of households in which servants would have lived and worked. Although the precise motivation for the inventory undoubtedly affected the way domestic goods were recorded, the small sample size allows for the type of ‘close reading’ necessary to understand these domestic arrangements, and how they may have altered for the process of the inventory.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ On this see B. Trinder, ‘The Wooden Horse in the Cellar: Words and Contexts in the Shropshire Probate Inventories’, in Arkell, Evans and Good, *When Death Do Us Part*, esp. p. 269. For the converse see Riello, ‘Things Seen and Unseen’, p. 137.

¹³⁷ Riello, ‘Things Seen and Unseen’, p. 137.

¹³⁸ On the tendency of women to bequeath domestic items see, for example, M. Berg, ‘Women’s Consumption and the Industrial Classes of Eighteenth-Century Britain’, *JSH*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (1996), pp. 415-434.

¹³⁹ Elizabeth Sowton, 1753, PROB 3/52/12, NA, GM transcript. For the practice of giving to servants see Vickery, ‘Women and the World of Goods: A Lancashire Consumer and Her Possessions, 1751-81’, J. Brewer and R. Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 1993 (London, 2003), pp. 274 – 301.

¹⁴⁰ William Armroid, 1773, C110/146, NA, GM transcript.

¹⁴¹ M. Ponsonby ‘Ideals, Reality and Meaning; Homemaking in England in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 16, No. 3, (2003), pp. 201-214. On inventories as inherently quantitative see Overton et al, *Production and Consumption*, p. 13.

The domestic space, as we have seen, is now understood to be comprised not only of bricks, mortar, and material things, but also the individual and collective practices that went on within it. Individual actions habitually performed and enacted within place are understood to irrevocably alter the meanings of particular spaces. The interaction of people and things have been recognised as central to this, and to have the power to re-define not only the habitus of individual actors in space, but the meaning of the space itself. These quotidian and often fleeting actions are, of course, more difficult to recover than the solid form of the built environment, or the designs laid down in architectural treatises or plans. Although something of domestic practices are hinted at in inventories, it is the records of the court that offer real insight into how this space operated in different households, and give a sense of its meaning for servants.

Court records have long been recognized as an important source for historians. As long ago as 1925, Dorothy George asserted that the condition of the ‘humbler section’ of the eighteenth-century population was ‘chiefly to be gathered from the incidental information of trials, depositions of witnesses, petitions to Quarter Sessions, reports of Coroner’s Inquests [and] Settlement Cases’.¹⁴² No longer restricted to the histories of crime, these records have become fundamental to social histories of all kinds.¹⁴³ The most recent work on service has embraced these records. The ‘core source’ for Tim Meldrum’s study was a collection of depositions made by servants before the London Consistory court between 1669 (the first year for which depositions survive following the Reformation) and 1752.¹⁴⁴ Paula Humfrey’s 2011 *Experience of Domestic Service for Women* was a published collection of servant depositions. The records she included in the collection were from the Court of Arches (the court of appeal for suits originating in the Consistory Court), and parish

¹⁴² M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, 1925 (London, 2000), p. 13.

¹⁴³ Important early examples of court records being used for social history include: M. Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640*, (Cambridge, 1987); Amussen, *An Ordered Society*; L. Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London*, (Oxford, 1996). Servants feature frequently in court records, see P. Earle, ‘The Female Labour Market in London: Defamation at the Bishop of London’s Consistory Court, 1700-1745’, *London Journal*, Vol. 19: 1, (1994), pp. 328-347; King, ‘Female Offenders’; Kent, ‘Ubiquitous but Invisible’, esp. p. 112; Gowing, ‘The Haunting of Susan Lay: Servants and Mistresses in Seventeenth-Century England’, *G&H*, Vol. 14 No. 2, (2002), pp. 183-201.

¹⁴⁴ Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, pp. 7-10, pp. 16- 19.

settlement examinations for St. Margaret in Westminster.¹⁴⁵ For Humfrey, the records of the court offered an ‘aperture into servants’ worldview’.¹⁴⁶ More recently, the digitisation of court records, and large-scale database projects have revealed the possibilities these records offer for quantitative assessment. This has been recognised as particularly fruitful for the study of women’s work that is often silent in other records. *The Gender and Work* project at Uppsala University and the *Women’s Work in Rural England, 1500-1700* project at Exeter have both embarked upon large-scale, multi-researcher projects to track activities through court records.¹⁴⁷ This large-scale overview of activities has revealed the significance of female labour in the early modern economy; and effectively critiqued understandings based solely on occupation labels and identities – typically associated with men.¹⁴⁸

Although settlement records, the records of the Foundling Hospital, and the records of the Mayoral and Consistory Court have been consulted during the research for this thesis, it is the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey* that are the basis for the arguments put forward here, and it is through these records that I have been able to trace the voices of servants themselves and evidence of their day-to-day action within (and beyond) the household. Unlike at the church courts, business at the Old Bailey continued throughout the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁹ The eighteenth-century strength of these records is important for it spans the significant historiographical breach between ‘early modern’ and ‘modern’ understandings of service, and the ‘transformation’ of service outlined above. If early modern analyses have focused on issues of power, gender and hierarchy, often within the household, nineteenth-century service has been understood in terms of a developing notion of ‘class’.¹⁵⁰ In many ways, the

¹⁴⁵ Humfrey uses the records from the Court of Arches from 1667-1735, and the St. Margaret Westminster Settlement Examinations from 1718 – 1735, Humfrey, *Experience of Domestic Service*, pp. 30- 31.

¹⁴⁶ P. Humfrey, “‘I Saw, Through a Large Chink in the Partition...’: What the Servants Knew’, V. Frith (ed.), *Women and History: Voices in Early Modern England*, (Toronto, 1995), pp. 51-80, quotation, p. 54.

¹⁴⁷ Gender and Work project at Uppsala University:

<www2.statsvet.uu.se/Default.aspx?alias=www2.statsvet.uu.se/genderandwork> ;

Women’s Work in Rural England, 1500-1700 at Exeter <

<http://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/history/research/centres/earlymodern/projects/womenswork/>>

¹⁴⁸ Also see A. Shepard *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status and the Social Order in Early Modern England*, (Oxford, 2015).

¹⁴⁹ For the decline of the church courts see Ingram, *Church Courts*, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ On early modern service see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*; Humfrey, *Experience of Domestic Service*; Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*; L. Gowing, ‘‘The Manner of Submission’: Gender and Demeanour in Seventeenth-Century London’, *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 10: 1 (2013), pp. 25-

distinction between these two narratives is informed by the sources under consideration. Early modern scholars have embraced the records of the church court and the rich social and cultural evidence they provide. These records and the analyses that spring from them come to an end, often abruptly, in 1750.¹⁵¹ Nineteenth-century analyses, on the other hand, have had recourse to the occupational information provided by the census return and as such are often structured according to economic imperatives. Spanning these two periods, and particularly strong in the neglected period between 1750 and 1800, the *Proceedings* help to reconcile the two.

A more practical reason for focusing on the *Proceedings* is that they have now been digitised, and are word searchable. In a recent article celebrating the tenth anniversary of the digitisation of the *Proceedings*, Tim Hitchcock called for historians to ‘confront the digital’.¹⁵² He was talking about the need for us to acknowledge the differences between digital and archival research, and to think about the ways in which we can move beyond thinking about the digital solely in terms of access. The fact that the *Proceedings* have been digitised not only means it is easier and more efficient to search these records, but also changes the questions we are able to ask of the information recorded.¹⁵³ No longer restricted to reading cases where servants were identified as prosecutors or defendants, or to the vagaries of an index system, access can be gained to every record where the word ‘servant’ (or ‘maid’, or ‘footman’) is mentioned. Of course, this is entirely possible without the digital record, but keyword searches for particular objects and spaces mean that this information is infinitely more accessible.

45. On nineteenth-century service see P. Horn, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant*, (New York, 1975). Recent work has criticised this distinction. See, Pooley, ‘Domestic Servants’; Barker and Hamlett ‘Living Above The Shop’. Also see above pp. 17-24.

¹⁵¹ Meldrum acknowledges that the ‘chronological limitations’ of his study ‘do not allow conclusive statements regarding change from the mid eighteenth century’, Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 66.

¹⁵² T. Hitchcock, ‘Confronting the Digital: Or How Academic History Writing Lost the Plot’, *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 10; Issue 1, (2013) pp. 9 -23. One of the pitfalls of digital records was made clear to me as, in the process of finishing the draft of this thesis, the websites of the *Humanities Research Institute* at the University of Sheffield (including the *OBP*) were attacked and was inaccessible.

¹⁵³ For examples see J. Styles, ‘Lodging at the Old Bailey: Lodgings and Their Furnishing in Eighteenth-Century London’, J. Styles and A. Vickery (eds), *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture*, pp. 61-80; Styles, *The Dress of the People*; A. Helmreich, T. Hitchcock and W. J. Turkel, ‘Rethinking Inventories in the Digital Age: The Case of the Old Bailey’, *Journal of Art Historiography*, No. 11, (2014), pp. 1-25.

We should also consider the particular methodological challenges of the *Proceedings*. The relationship between the manuscripts of the court and the printed *Proceedings* has been examined extensively.¹⁵⁴ The *Proceedings* were a printed publication and were never intended as a formal record of what had occurred at court. Because of this, the depositions, informations and examinations that were produced as evidence against the accused often include more information than the published *Proceedings* – although time constraints have meant it has not been possible to check particular records against the manuscript. Although the *Proceedings* survive from their inception in 1674 until 1913, this chronological longevity should not blind us to significant change over time. By the middle of the eighteenth century, daily newspapers and other periodicals were threatening the commercial viability of the *Proceedings*, and their form and function shifted in response. Simon Devereaux and John Langbein, who have worked extensively with these records, have likened the eighteenth-century format to an official legal report. For Devereaux, by the end of the eighteenth century, the *Proceedings* were acting both as a commercial document for public consumption and as a legal record of the court for administrative purposes.¹⁵⁵ By 1775 the City of London was demanding that the *Proceedings* should provide a ‘true, fair and perfect narrative’ of all trials. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, then, the *Proceedings* were reporting the business of the court at great length. This ‘perfect narrative’ is typified by the reportership of Edmund Hodgson, official reporter from September 1782 until December 1790. According to Langbein, trials held during these years were reported in ‘exceptional detail’.¹⁵⁶ The period focus of this thesis was informed by historical narratives about home and work and the changing relationship between servant and master, but was also influenced by this unprecedented period of richness in the *Proceedings*.

As Laura Gowing has suggested, using court records ‘requires a full attention to the circumstance of their production’.¹⁵⁷ Unlike the church courts which form the basis

¹⁵⁴ See R. Shoemaker, ‘The Old Bailey Proceedings and the Representation of Crime and Criminal Justice in Eighteenth-Century London’, *JBS*, Vol. 47. No. 3 (2008), pp. 559-580; J. Langbein, ‘The Historical Foundations of the Law of Evidence: A View from the Ryder Sources’, *Columbia Law Review*, (1996), pp. 1168-1202.

¹⁵⁵ S. Devereaux, ‘The City and the Sessions Paper: ‘Public Justice’ in London, 1770-1800’, *JBS*, Vol. 35: 4 (1996) pp. 466-503.

¹⁵⁶ J. Langbein, *The Origins of Adversary Criminal Trial*, (Oxford, 2005), p. 188; p. 471.

¹⁵⁷ Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, p. 41.

of Meldrum and Humfrey's analysis, and which are the basis of much of Gowing's work, the Old Bailey oversaw the prosecution for felonies. The Old Bailey was the metropolitan equivalent of the assize courts, and heard the most serious offences committed within its jurisdiction of the City of London and Middlesex.¹⁵⁸ While the church courts spent their time on 'the stuff of everyday life', the court at the Old Bailey was concerned only with the exceptional.¹⁵⁹ For all their exceptionality, however, these records include a wealth of information about everyday life. Access to the quotidian is often understood to be possible through 'incidental' references in court records. These details are assumed to reflect the 'real' as opposed to the prescriptive or literary imaginings of other sources, and the 'everyday' as opposed to the apparent aberration of the criminal act. These records certainly get us closer to the lives of members of the population who, like servants, tend to have left few written records. But these 'incidental' details are not unproblematic reflections of 'real' life; they are part of a criminal narrative and highlight only those 'everyday' details that correspond with that imperative. Hans-Joachim Voth's study of time-use during the industrial revolution suggests the extent to which this is the case. Voth's study is based on the rich details about time-use that were provided by witnesses at court. Voth found that many witnesses provided details about their lives that were not necessarily related to the crime in question, but instead functioned to establish their own credibility for the court, and their reliability as witnesses. Although Voth compared witness accounts from the Old Bailey with modern time-budget studies of random hour recall, he was clear that these records did not simply record 'random' activities throughout the day but were concentrated around peaks of criminal activity.¹⁶⁰ These records are partial records; information about the function and meaning of the domestic space is revealed only by incidental references within a criminal narrative. Because of this, I have not embarked upon the type of large-scale data retrieval outlined above; the mechanisms which brought a case before the court of the Old Bailey mean that a quantitative analysis of the location of servants over the period would be too reliant on the times and locations of that crime. Instead, I

¹⁵⁸ For the types of crime prosecuted at the Old Bailey see J. Beattie, *Policing and Punishment in London, 1660-1750: Urban Crime and the Limits of the Terror*, (Oxford, 2001), esp. p. 13; C. Emsley, T. Hitchcock and R. Shoemaker, 'Crime and Justice-Crimes Times at the Old Bailey', *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*.

¹⁵⁹ Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England*, (Cambridge, 2003), p. 12.

¹⁶⁰ Voth, *Time and Work*.

have focused on particular domestic spaces and objects in order to think-through servants' relationships to these spaces. Individuals, in these records, reveal their real and imagined relationships with these spaces, and something of the lived experiences through which they are given meaning. Material objects, de-contextualised in inventories and wills, are here reintegrated into the spaces and meanings of everyday life. Taken together, this information provides the thickest of 'thick description' of metropolitan domestic spaces, and the place of servants within them. It is together that the function of the domestic space for servants can start to be explored.

Outline of thesis

This thesis seeks to reintegrate servants into the eighteenth-century domestic space through four substantive chapters. The first two on the kitchen and garret offer an overtly bottom-up approach to the domestic space, which unapologetically shifts the focus from householder to servant, and from the much-examined world of parlour and drawing room to the neglected spaces of kitchen and garret. I use the 'bottom-up' metaphor here only in its social history guise, for, as the location of these spaces suggests, the upstairs/downstairs dichotomy is not applicable to the majority of eighteenth-century domestic spaces in which servants lived. These spaces have typically been understood to suggest the marginalisation of servants within the household; it is thought that over the course of the early modern period, servants were 'relegated' to separate domestic spaces, away from the family and the 'proper' functioning of domestic life. Despite the potential these spaces offer for our understanding of the place of servants within contemporary society, their meanings are typically assumed, and read from what they are not. The oppositional distinctions of front stage/ back stage, high status/low status, leisure/ work are thought to map directly onto those areas associated with service, and those associated with the family. The focus on the kitchen and the garret has been constructed as a direct challenge to these types of assumptions, and as an attempt to access what might be revealed in a history of the household that makes space for servants. If, for those scholars working on histories of popular culture it is spaces *outside* the household that are recognised as significant, this thesis reveals the significance of spaces *within*

the prototypical heartland of cultural reproduction – the home.¹⁶¹ This is not to suggest that these spaces are to be understood as sites of an alternative servant subculture, or as the location of an organised resistance movement against an exploitative employing ‘class’. Servants could be fully implicated in the domestic project and many appear to have demonstrated loyalty and allegiance to masters and mistresses against other servants who threatened to disrupt the domestic order.¹⁶² The kitchen and the garret are explored here not as sites of a specific servant subculture within the home, but because the presence of servants was acknowledged in these spaces more so than anywhere else within the house. This is an attempt to distinguish but not isolate these spaces, and recognise the discrete spatial experiences and behavioural scripts that operated within them. Focusing on these sites draws attention to servants within the household, but also to the multiple (and often problematic) ways in which these spaces demanded the interaction of household members, the meeting of individuals of different status and at different stages of the life cycle, as well as the negotiation of extra-domestic forces. These spaces suggest the ways in which servants were accommodated within the eighteenth-century domestic space, and hint at their own understanding and experience of life within it.

The second part of the thesis moves away from a focus on discrete spaces of the house to an understanding of the broader spatial and material worlds in which servants operated. Although the material lives of servants have been a subject of much discussion, this has typically been within fairly limited terms of reference. Servants are seen as key figures in the ‘trickle-down’ theory of the consumer revolution, as the proto-typical ‘emulative’ consumer whose place within the domestic space sheltered them from the cycles of poverty that halted the spending of others, and exposed them to a variety of ‘luxury’ goods ‘above their station’. Neil McKendrick famously argued that the ‘expansion of the market ...occurred first

¹⁶¹ See, for example, P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 1978 (Farnham, 1998). For recent example see M. Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England*. (Suffolk, 2014); F. Williamson, (ed.), *Locating Agency: Space, Power and Popular Politics*, (Newcastle, 2010).

¹⁶² On assumptions about the political and social conservatism of servants see Schwartz, ‘What We Feel is Needed is a Union for Domesticity’ and L. Schwartz, ‘“A Job Like Any Other?” Feminist Responses and Challenges to Domestic Worker Organising in Edwardian Britain’, *International Labour and Working Class History*, No. 88. (2015), pp. 30-48.

among the domestic servant class'.¹⁶³ John Styles has been the most vocal critic of this type of emulative consumption, arguing that although servants were voracious and varied consumers, that their material knowledge was gleaned from a much broader source-base than simply their mistresses. Styles demonstrated that servants were active participants in the transformation of material life of the period, but also that the master of the house played an important role in facilitating access to these goods through his own credit networks.¹⁶⁴ It was not the case, as in E.P. Thompson's formulation, that new patterns of consumption were incompatible with more traditional 'customs' of economic activity, nor that 'the people' were necessarily victims of new forms of capitalist organisation.¹⁶⁵ Chloe Wigston Smith has similarly critiqued the dichotomy between the material expectations and behaviours of masters and mistresses and those of their servants; although contemporaries critiqued the spending of female servants on 'luxury' imported calico, this was more about the abandonment of the English woollen industry than a critique of servant consumption *per se*. Indeed, through these arguments the social and economic power of servants was made manifest; it was thought the spending of servants would re-start local manufacture and bolster the national economy.¹⁶⁶ These scholars have done much to restore the agency of servants to important historical narratives which have typically focused on the standard of living and the anonymous basket of goods.

Chapters three and four are heavily indebted to this work, but, like recent work on material culture, seek to move 'beyond' consumption to understand more fully the material worlds in which servants inhabited.¹⁶⁷ Chapter three, on servants' boxes explores not only which goods were in the servant's possession, but how they conceived of these items, and how they functioned within the domestic space. The chapter locates the narratives of servant consumption within the household, and

¹⁶³ N. McKendrick, 'The Commercialization of Fashion', in McKendrick, J. Brewer and J.H. Pumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: Commercialization of England*, (Bloomington, 1982), p. 60. For criticism see B. Fine and E. Leopold, 'Consumerism and the Industrial Revolution', *Social History*, Vol.15, No. 2, (1990), esp. p. 169. For discussion of this literature, see Styles, *The Dress of the People*, pp. 3-6, pp. 277-278.

¹⁶⁴ Styles, *The Dress of the People*, pp. 277-301, esp. p. 289.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

¹⁶⁶ Wigston Smith, 'Callico Madams'.

¹⁶⁷ For example see Vickery, 'World of Goods'; S. Pennell, 'Pots and Pans History': the Material Culture of the Kitchen in Early Modern England', *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 11, No. 3, (1998), pp. 201-216; K. Harvey (ed.), *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, (Abingden, 2009); F. Trentman, 'Materiality in the Future of History: Things, Practices, and Politics', *JBS*, Vol. 48, Issue 2, (2009), pp. 283-307.

seeks to understand the boundaries between servants' material worlds and those of their masters and mistresses. The fourth chapter, on material interaction, moves further away still from an understanding of material culture simply as products of consumption practices. The fleeting encounters with domestic objects revealed in this chapter confirm the importance of thinking about the biographies of objects, and the manner in which these everyday material interactions informed servants' experiences of domestic life and their place within the domestic space. The argument implicit in these chapters is that our understanding of the place of servants within the domestic space has been informed by the focus on the householder; by refocusing attention on the servants of the house, the meaning of the domestic space can be imagined anew.

Chapter One: The Kitchen

The general Place of Rendezvous for all the Servants, both in Winter and Summer, is the Kitchen; there the grand Affairs of the Family ought to be consulted; whether they concern the Stable, the Dairy, the Pantry, the Laundry, the Cellar, the Nursery, the Dining room, or my Lady's Chamber: There, as in your own proper Element, you can laugh, and squall, and romp, in full Security.

Jonathan Swift, *Directions for Servants*, (London, 1745), p. 10.

For Jonathan Swift, the kitchen was an important site for servants. In contrast to the rest of the domestic space where dissembling, deception and artifice ruled, the kitchen was the domestic location in which the 'true' nature of servants was revealed.¹⁶⁸ In Swift, the kitchen was imagined as a 'back stage' zone where the bodily postures, vocal restraint, and performances of behavioural decorum demanded elsewhere in the house were abandoned, and servants could 'laugh, and squall, and romp, in full Security'.¹⁶⁹ Rather than the meek, humble and submissive figure of the ideal eighteenth-century domestic, Swift's kitchen-dwelling servants were boisterous, disruptive and physically imposed themselves on the domestic space: servants were advised to 'make it a constant rule, that no chair, stool or table, in the ...kitchen, shall have above three legs', for example.¹⁷⁰ The three-legged furniture was intended to portray the servants' humility (their 'tottering Condition'), but also drew attention to the inherent sexuality and violence of the kitchen's inhabitants. The furniture was broken because 'a Chair or a Table is the first Weapon taken up in a general Rumping or Skirmish' between the 'fat and heavy' cook and the butler 'a little in Drink'.¹⁷¹ The carnivalesque 'laugh' and 'squal' of servants is also significant; the kitchen in Swift, as in other eighteenth-century representations, was associated with a cacophony of noise that originated from the person of the servant, but was joined by the barking of dogs, the caterwauling of cats, the clatter of china and the playing of music. In representations such as these, the house was imagined as divided in two; the symbolically opposed realms of kitchen and parlour (more broadly of 'upstairs' and 'downstairs') ordered the domestic spaces of many fictional

¹⁶⁸ Swift, *Directions to Servants*, (London, 1745), *passim*.

¹⁶⁹ For 'frontstage' and 'backstage' behaviours see E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1959, (London, 1990). For an application of Goffman's work in the context of the domestic space see Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, esp. p. 17. For criticism see S. Raffel, 'The Everyday Life of the Self: Reworking Early Goffman', *Journal of Classical Sociology*, Vol. 13, No. 1, (2013), pp. 163-178.

¹⁷⁰ Swift, *Directions*, p. 7, p. 8. For critical responses to Swift see *Domestic Management, Or, The Art of Conducting a Family*, (London, 1800), esp. p. 16 and *The Complete Servant, By Samuel and Sarah Adams, Fifty years Servants in different Families*, (London, 1825), pp. 42-49

¹⁷¹ Swift, *Directions*, pp. 8-9.

eighteenth-century household; their occupants became synonymous with them, and were represented as waged in a perpetual tug-of-war for domestic power and resources.¹⁷²



Fig. 1. James Caldwell (after John Collett), *High Life Below Stairs*, engraving, 1772, BM.

The eighteenth-century kitchen was clearly an important site through which social difference was imagined in fiction and in visual representation. How much these fictional spaces resonated with servants or their masters and mistresses is, however, far from clear. The kitchens depicted in these contemporary representations were much larger, subject to a higher degree of specialisation, and populated with far greater numbers of servants than the majority of kitchens in which servants were employed. Although imagined as a ‘sequestered’ site away from the surveillance of their masters and mistresses, the extent to which kitchens were actually inhabited

¹⁷² See, for example, J. Townley, *High Life Below Stairs, A Farce*, (London, 1759). On this see M.A. Soliday, *High Life Below Stairs: Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, PhD thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, (1990). On reception see Hecht, *Domestic Servant Class*, pp. 163-164 and G. Russell, “‘Keeping Place’: Servants, Theatre and Sociability in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain”, *The Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 42. No. 1, (2001), pp. 21-42. See the reportage of Eliza Fenning’s attempted murder of the family for whom she worked; newspapers recorded that there was ‘the same species of hostility between kitchen and parlour in the house of Mr Turner, as in that of almost every other person in the Metropolis’, see P. Seleski, ‘Domesticity is in the Streets: Eliza Fenning, Public Opinion and the Politics of Private Life’, in T. Harris, (ed.), *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500-1850*, (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 283.

solely by servants remains to be seen.¹⁷³ Moreover, if, in the eighteenth-century cultural lexicon, the kitchen revealed the disturbing possibility of the presence of ‘low’ or ‘popular’ culture within the middling and genteel domestic space, this was a ‘world turned upside down’, a reversal of more normal domestic power-relations. These imagined scenes might be understood as one of the multiple mechanisms through which the meaning of the household was secured, and the authority of the master and mistress over the domicile reiterated. It was precisely because these scenes were anomalies, distorted reflections of ‘real’ domestic practices that they were humorous and could be circulated so widely within ‘genteel’ society. As the acknowledged centre of servants’ most laborious work, the kitchen might also be understood as the premier site of their subordination. It is significant that even in this topsy-turvy world apparently beyond the surveillance of masters and mistresses, the tactics adopted by servants were not out-and-out resistance, but the waste, extravagance, idleness and gossip typically associated with ‘weapons of the weak’.¹⁷⁴ If, in the eighteenth-century imagination, the kitchen was a site in which servants made a mockery of the domestic economy and authority of their master and mistress and the social and political structures on which it was founded, the centrality of the kitchen to the ‘proper’ functioning of the house and society is also revealed.

The kitchen was a significant domestic location for servants. Tim Meldrum suggested that it was the ‘focal point for servants’ in all households and that it was ‘one of the single most frequently-mentioned locations for servant witnesses at the church courts’ in seventeenth-century London.¹⁷⁵ The *Proceedings* reveal that the kitchen was also an important site for servants in eighteenth-century London; the kitchen was the first port-of-call for servants in the morning, and although their duties might take them well beyond its door in the course of the daytime, it was a space to which servants gravitated.¹⁷⁶ The kitchen is, then, the obvious starting-point from which to explore the relationship of servants to the household, and to broaden the narrative about eighteenth-century domestic life beyond the parlour door. Despite the commonsense assumption that the kitchen was the locus of action for domestic

¹⁷³ For the famous account of ‘sequestered’ sites see J.C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, (New Haven and London, 1990), esp. pp. 120-123.

¹⁷⁴ See J.C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, (New Haven and London, 1985),

¹⁷⁵ Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 142.

¹⁷⁶ See below, pp. 88-89.

servants, and the regularity with which servants were represented as such in contemporary literature and visual representations, the relationship of servants to the space of the kitchen has not yet been the subject of enquiry.

The failure to acknowledge the significance of the relationship between servants and the kitchen is partly the result of a more general historiographical neglect of this space. Although kitchens appear in scholarly accounts which trace the changing layout and architectural development of houses in the past, the exact material constitution, function and meaning of this space has only recently been the subject of enquiry.¹⁷⁷ Where the kitchen does feature in historical accounts, it is generally the result of a (fairly narrow) interest in 'housework' typically over the 'longue duree', or in descriptive histories of country house kitchens or 'cuisines'.¹⁷⁸ The kitchen is rarely mentioned in the most imaginative work on the eighteenth-century domestic space, which tends to focus on the 'new' developments of closets, parlours, drawing and dressing rooms.¹⁷⁹ The development of the spatially segregated kitchen was, however, continually implicated in the now outmoded narratives of the development of separate gendered 'spheres'. The argument that women were 'ousted' from multifunctional halls and 'relegated' to 'isolated' kitchens at the back of the house or 'below stairs' has dominated scholarly discussion of this space. The kitchen, according to these narratives, is understood as a 'feminised' space aligned with the processes of production and is assumed to exist solely to support the functions of the more polite 'front stage' spaces of parlour and drawing room.¹⁸⁰ According to this narrative, the kitchen is understood as the 'major site of women's oppression' from which the women of the house fled if she got the chance.¹⁸¹ If the kitchen is

¹⁷⁷ It was Sara Pennell's article which consolidated my interest in the kitchen and which drew my attention to the significance of the historical lacuna around it. The research for this chapter was inspired by that article, but was completed before the publication of *The Birth of the British Kitchen*. See Pennell, 'Pots and Pans'; Pennell, *The Birth of the English Kitchen, 1600-1850*, (London and New York, 2016).

¹⁷⁸ See for example, P. Seabrook and P. Brears (eds), *The Country House Kitchen, 1650-1900*, (Stroud, 1996); C. Hardyment, *Behind the Scenes: Domestic Arrangements in Historic Houses*, 1992, (London, 1997); C. Davidson, *A Woman's Work is Never Done: A History of Housework in the British Isles, 1650-1950*, 1982, (London, 1983).

¹⁷⁹ On this see Pennell, *The Birth of the English Kitchen*, pp. 2- 3, p. 38.

¹⁸⁰ See, for example, A. Yentsch, 'The Symbolic Division of Pottery: Sex-related Attributes of English and Anglo-American Household Pots', in R. H. McGuire and R. Paynter, *The Archaeology of Inequality*, (Oxford, 1991), pp. 192-230; M. Johnson, *An Archaeology of Capitalism*, (Oxford, 1996), pp. 177-178.

¹⁸¹ S. Ahrentzen, 'The Meaning of Home Workplaces for Women' in J.P Jones III, H. J Nast and A. M. Roberts (eds), *Thresholds in Feminist Geography: Difference, Methodology, Representations*, (Lanham, 1997), pp. 77-92. For criticism see Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres'.

understood to play an important role in the growing inequality between men and women, it is also, and not unrelatedly, thought to register the increasing social distance between the mistress of the house and her servants. The association of the kitchen with the labour of the house is understood to correspond with an increasingly class-based distinction between a life of leisure lived 'upstairs' and that of the workers below. Although the withdrawal of the mistress from the work of the house has since been effectively critiqued, what this meant for servants in the kitchen remains unclear.¹⁸² Either entirely neglected, or made to stand in for patriarchal and class-based oppression, the kitchen has not only been bypassed through assumptions of insignificance, but wilfully disregarded in an attempt to 'liberate' women and servants from confinement within.

Recent work has offered a more nuanced picture of the workings of the kitchen. The extent to which the kitchen can be understood as a 'back stage' site exclusively populated by women or by servants has been challenged by a number of scholars. Sara Pennell's influential article 'Pots and Pans' and her recent monograph *The Birth of the English Kitchen* have drawn attention to the sociability and conviviality of the kitchen hearth. Instead of a space of separation and segregation the early modern kitchen is now understood as a 'locus of "spatial solidarity"'.¹⁸³ This is not to say that the kitchen did not play a vital role in the marking out of social relationships; as many scholars have suggested, spaces do not need to be segregated in order for social identities to be made manifest. Indeed, for Pennell and others, the kitchen is understood as a 'crucible' through which social relations and identities were forged and worked-through.¹⁸⁴ Not limited to inter-household relations, Pennell also drew attention to the important role the kitchen played in navigating the relationship

¹⁸² The extent to which the end of the eighteenth century saw the withdrawal of the mistress from the work of the house has been extensively debated. It is clear from the published literature that there was a very real concern about servants taking advantage of their mistress's ignorance. Isaac Watts, for example, exhorted the importance of the education of daughters 'to know when they are performed alright, that the servants may not usurp too much power, and impose on the ignorance of the mistress', and cautioned that when 'children set up at once to govern a Family; but so ignorance in all those Concerns, that, from the garret to the Kitchen, the whole House is entirely ruled by the Humour of the Servants, because the young Mistress knows not how to instruct or correct them', See I. Watts, *Improving the Mind*, (London, 1782), p. 228. For evidence of the continued importance of the mistress's managerial work even in genteel households see Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*; Meldrum, *Domestic Service*; Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, pp. 181-182.

¹⁸³ Pennell, 'Pots and Pans', p. 207; Pennell, *The Birth of the English Kitchen*, p. 116. Also see J., Whittle, 'The House as a Place of Work in Early Modern Rural England', *Home Cultures*, Vol. 9, Issue 2, (2011), pp. 136-7.

¹⁸⁴ Steedman, *Labours Lost*, pp. 65-98, pp. 276-303.

between the domestic space and those external to it; it was a site where those ‘internal and external to the household could come together with relatively equal rights of access and belonging, and in which relations of proximity – between family, kin and neighbours – are often enacted’.¹⁸⁵ Rather than ‘back stage’ beyond the ‘gaze’ of men, the kitchen, in Pennell’s account, becomes an important site of social action, enmeshed in complex processes of historical change. If *The Birth of the English Kitchen* challenged assumptions about the kitchen as a feminised ‘back stage’ zone, it also critiqued nostalgic assumptions about the early modern kitchen as a uniformly ‘traditional’ space. Indeed, one of the main achievements of Pennell’s work has been to identify the kitchen as a key site of technological innovation, a location through which ‘modernity’ was manifested and managed within the household.¹⁸⁶ Pennell’s work offers an important corrective to the historiography of the kitchens and the domestic space more broadly. If many of the conclusions reached in this chapter align with those reached by Pennell, the focus is slightly different. Pennell’s account charts the ‘birth’ of the English kitchen from 1600 to 1850, covers kitchen-spaces from across the country, and engages in much more detail with the material realities of these spaces. This chapter, in contrast, focuses exclusively on the relationship of servants to London kitchens in the period between 1750 and 1800. Although the kitchen was hugely significant as a way of imagining difference between servants and their masters and mistresses, we know very little of the actual functioning of these spaces. This chapter is an attempt to determine who was present in eighteenth-century kitchens, what they were doing, and how that space might have been experienced and understood by servants within it.

Below stairs?

Before we can understand the meanings of the kitchen for eighteenth-century servants, we first need to map out something of the location of this space. By the beginning of our period, most domestic spaces in London had a room which was identified as a ‘kitchen’.¹⁸⁷ Although typically designated a ‘back stage’ zone, the

¹⁸⁵ Pennell, ‘Pots and Pans’, esp. p. 207.

¹⁸⁶ Pennell, *The Birth of the English Kitchen*, esp. pp. 6-7 and *passim*. For spatial approach to ‘modernity’ see Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity*.

¹⁸⁷ Although multipurpose ‘houseplaces’ were used for cooking and other activities, kitchens had become the main site of food preparation by the early seventeenth century; Weatherill, *Consumer*

location was not the defining feature of this space. There is nothing of the assumed post-fire uniformity of the domestic space suggested in the inventory sample from the Geffrye or in the *Proceedings*. In 1752, for example, the probate inventory of the poulterer Stephen Dobbs suggests his kitchen was on the second floor; the inventory indicates a four-storey house one room deep with the kitchen between a room on the third floor used for sleeping and a room on the first floor which functioned as a parlour or dining room above Dobbs' shop, which was on the ground floor.¹⁸⁸ A number of the inventories also suggest the continuation of the first-floor kitchen layout which was identified by Peter Earle as 'common' at the beginning of the century.¹⁸⁹ When an inventory of Benjamin Axford's house on Wood Street was compiled as part of a dispute heard at the court of Chancery in 1756, for example, it suggested that the kitchen was on the first floor adjacent to a dining room and a room designed for sleeping, and above the two parlours on the ground floor and a 'cellor', presumably on the floor beneath.¹⁹⁰ That this arrangement had not died out by the end of the century is indicated by the inventory of Gawler Gryffyth Rickman's house, which was taken in 1800, and which also suggests the kitchen was on the first floor adjacent to a parlour and above a shop.¹⁹¹ Although the 'ease' with which Londoners navigated the steep staircases of the metropolis was commented upon by contemporaries, the location of the kitchen nestled at the centre of vertical domestic space clearly undermines simplistic assumptions about a unilateral desire to conceal the kitchen and its labour from the rest of the household.¹⁹² As Pennell suggests, '[m]odern depictions of the kitchen as a 'back stage' zone and as 'private' homogenize the variability of its location and accessibility'.¹⁹³ Peter Guillery has convincingly warned of the perils of assuming the ascendancy of new-built structures even by the nineteenth century, and, however dramatic the development of London's

Behaviour, p. 150; Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 210; Brown, 'Continuity and Change', p. 584; Overton et al, *Production and Consumption*, p. 130. For evidence of geographical variation and the continuation of 'houseplace' outside of London see Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, p. 10-11; Pennell, *The Birth of the English Kitchen*, p. 41; Hoskins, *Reading the Inventory*, p. 185, pp. 188-9.

¹⁸⁸ Stephen Dobbs, 1753, PROB 3/51/6, NA, GM transcript.

¹⁸⁹ Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, pp. 209-210.

¹⁹⁰ Benjamin Axford, 1756, C110/151, NA, GM transcript.

¹⁹¹ Gawler Gryffth Rickman, 1800, PROB31/913/733, NA, GM transcript;

¹⁹² D. Cruickshank and N. Burton, *Life in the Georgian City*, (London, 1990), p. 51.

¹⁹³ Pennell, 'Pots and Pans', p. 202. Also see Pennell, *Birth of English Kitchen*, pp. 46- 55.

built environment was over the course of the eighteenth century, it is not the case that servants' lives were conducted solely 'below stairs'.¹⁹⁴

The 'great rebuilding' of eighteenth-century London did, however, signal a significant transformation in the location of the kitchen.¹⁹⁵ By the middle of the century, it was the kitchen's location on a 'subterraneous' floor that dominated contemporary discussion and which provided the location for many of the powerful literary and visual imaginings of the space 'below stairs'. In 1768 the architect Isaac Ware described how '[t]he lower storey of these houses in *London* is sunk entirely under ground, for which reason it is damp, unwholesome and uncomfortable'.¹⁹⁶ If new houses could be built with kitchens 'below stairs', older structures could also be 'repaired and fitted up' to make space for such a feature.¹⁹⁷ Although hardly ubiquitous, the underground kitchen was a significant development of the eighteenth century, and most of the kitchens in the sample appear to have been on the ground floor or below ground level.¹⁹⁸ Understanding the motivation for, and implications of, this development from a distance of over two hundred years is difficult. Traditionally, this has been understood to result from the desire to segregate 'front stage' from 'back stage' activities, and conceal the work and 'dirt' of the house from

¹⁹⁴ Guillery, *The Small House*, esp. pp. 1-2.

¹⁹⁵ The 'Great Rebuilding' was coined to describe the building projects of the years between 1570 and 1640, but may also been used to describe metropolitan developments in the eighteenth century. For original use see W. G. Hoskins, 'The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570-1640', *P&P*, No. 4, (1953). For eighteenth-century development see George, *London Life*, esp. pp. 74- 115.

¹⁹⁶ I. Ware, *A Complete Body of Architecture. Adorned with Plans and Elevations, from Original Designs*, (London, 1768), p. 346. On this see Burton and Cruickshank, *Life in the Georgian City*, pp. 52-53.

¹⁹⁷ See for example: 'To be lett, in Golden-Leg-Court; near Queen-Street, Cheapside, a House, completely repaired and fitted up, consisting of a Kitchen under Ground, 17 Feet by 16, with all other Conveniences', *Daily Advertiser*, (London, May 17, 1774), issue 13542.

¹⁹⁸ It is difficult to identify underground kitchen because stairs were rarely noted on inventories. Examples of kitchens on the ground floor might be: Hepworth, 1740, C103/176, NA, GM transcript; John Mitford, 1740, C113/11, NA, GM transcript; William Snelling, 1740, CLA/002/02/01/3384, LMA, GM transcript; William Hiccocks, 1748, PROB 3/48/7, NA, GM transcript; Wilkinson Crumpton, 1764, C110/157, NA, GM transcript; John Jackson, 1786, J90/1843, NA, GM transcript. The constellations of service areas associated with underground kitchens is suggested in the houses of: William Crawford, 1740, PROB 3/40/26, NA, GM transcript; Frances Gibson, 1745, PROB 3/45/17, NA, GM transcript; James Gooding, 1746, PROB 3/46/8, NA, GM transcript; Thomas Hill, 1746, PROB 3/46/4, NA, GM transcript; Thomas Robinson, 1772, C103/195, NA, GM transcript; Benjamin Tice, 1744, C111/227, NA, GM transcript; George Bratwaite 1745, C105/5, NA, GM transcript; John Brice, 1749, C103/176, NA, GM transcript; Christian Tiethen, 1761, C104/211, NA, GM transcript; Richard Davies, 1778, C110/187, NA, GM transcript; James Waller 1782, C108/ 367, NA, GM transcript; Gawler Gryffyth Rickman 1800; John Sears, 1800, PROB 31/921/639, NA, GM transcript; James Blatch, 1796, PROB 31/915/62, NA, GM transcript; Nicholas Browning, 1800, PROB 31/921/736, NA, GM transcript. For the variety of kitchen spaces found in the *Proceedings* see discussion below, esp. pp. 66-72.

its public ‘facade’.¹⁹⁹ More recent research has focused on the practical aspects of spatial segregation. It is frequently noted, for example, that Isaac Ware explained the desire for an underground kitchen simply as a response to the demand for space in the overcrowded metropolis.²⁰⁰ The development of a separate kitchen at the back of the house or below stairs might also be understood in the context of what Leonore Davidoff has called the ‘rationalization of housework’.²⁰¹ Closer to the amenities of coal, water and outside space, underground kitchens were commonly portrayed as a ‘convenience’ by contemporaries.²⁰² Lena Orlin argued that the expansion of service areas in large households seemed ‘more focused on the order required to achieve productivity than on the social hierarchy and seclusion generally associated with specialization’.²⁰³ Sara Pennell too stressed the more practical stimuli for room specialisation. According to Pennell’s analysis, the removal of other activities from the multi-functional kitchen spaces can be understood as a result of technological innovation rather than a desire to specialise domestic activities *per se*: although the closing of the hearth, for example, allowed greater control over cooking temperatures, it prohibited other activities that may have taken place around an open fire, notably those associated with the occupation of the householder. Similarly, Pennell suggested that the development of separate sculleries, washhouses and pantries (some of which would have been equipped with their own coppers), be understood as a result of lowering fuel costs and the increasing provision of piped water.²⁰⁴ These arguments have done much to critique understandings of the kitchen as governed simply by the desire to distance, segregate and separate the work that went on within it. It is undoubtedly true that the development of the built environment was much more complex than has been suggested, but we should also consider how this specialisation impacted the status and self-identification of those

¹⁹⁹ As above, footnote 180.

²⁰⁰ Ware, *A Complete Body of Architecture*, p. 346.

²⁰¹ L. Davidoff, ‘The Rationalization of Housework’ in D. Leonard Barker, and S. Allen (eds), *Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage*, (London, 1976), pp. 121-151.

²⁰² One householder advertised a house with ‘a very good Under-ground Kitchen and Cellar, a Pump, and plenty of good Water; also a Pantry, and other Conveniences’, another a ‘modern built brick dwelling house’ with ‘two convenient kitchens under ground’, *Public Advertiser*, (London, Thursday, October 30, 1774), Issue 14058; *Daily Post* (London, Saturday, August 14, 1725), Issue 1837. On the changing meanings of convenience see J. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities and Design in Early Modern Britain and Early America*, (Baltimore, 2010), esp. p. 151.

²⁰³ Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, p. 99.

²⁰⁴ Pennell, *The Birth of the English Kitchen*, pp. 43-44. For fuel costs, Pennell cites G. Clark and D. Jacks, ‘Coal and the industrial revolution, 1700-1869’, *European Review of Economic History*, Vol. 11, Issue, 1, (2007), pp. 39-72.

who laboured within it. If separate kitchens were created in response to demands of productivity and changing domestic technology, what did this mean for expectations of domestic work?²⁰⁵ Although these spaces may not have been designed simply to conceal the heat, noise, and smell generated by domestic labour, did those who spent the most time in these spaces assume some of these characteristics? And what might it mean to inhabit a space predominantly associated with the ‘work’ of the house?

‘I was in the kitchen’

The ‘spatial turn’, as we have seen, has shifted the focus from understanding the meanings and functions of particular spaces from architectural design and layout to an understanding which takes account of the continual reproduction of space through action and re-action.²⁰⁶ The *Proceedings* offer insight into how this space operated in different households and give a sense of its meaning for servants. Where possible, these examples are drawn into conversation with examples from the inventory sample outlined in the introduction. As both sources offer only an incomplete sense of the domestic arrangements and its occupants, evidence from each is offered only as a suggestion of possible domestic arrangements. Given what we know about the social bias of the inventories, it seems likely that the *Proceedings* allows us to access kitchens further down the social scale than those recorded in the inventory sample. If scholarly discussion has focused on the kitchen as a marginal site of segregation, a back-stage zone characterised only by the necessary processes of reproduction, this chapter re-configures the kitchen as a site of central importance to the eighteenth-century domestic space. It was, as Pennell suggests, neither front stage nor back stage, but centre-stage, particularly for those servants who spent much of their lives within it.²⁰⁷

A sample from the *Proceedings* was taken to get a sense of who it was that was present in the kitchen at the end of the eighteenth century, and what they were doing in that space. The sample spans the period from September 1782 to December 1791

²⁰⁵ On the canonical account of the way in which technological ‘advance’ could disadvantage those involved in domestic labour see R. Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave*, (1983). On the ways in which domestic layout influenced social relationships see Hamlett, *Material Relations*, esp. p. 3, p. 11, p. 118.

²⁰⁶ See introduction, esp. pp. 29-36.

²⁰⁷ Pennell, *The Birth of the English Kitchen*.

when the business of the court was recorded in exceptional detail in the *Proceedings*. Although information about witnesses, including occupational data, is recorded in more detail in the manuscript records, in this period – and this period alone – the manuscript court records and the printed *Proceedings* are unusually similar.²⁰⁸ It is the digitisation of the *Proceedings* that has allowed the sample to be narrowed from 7618 trial accounts heard in the period to 448 accounts that mention the word ‘kitchen’.²⁰⁹ In the course of these 448 accounts, a variety of accused, witnesses and bystanders located themselves in the kitchen. In some of these accounts, they also tell the court what they were doing in that room. Searching for phrases such as ‘I was in the kitchen’, ‘I had been in the kitchen’, or ‘s/he was in the kitchen’ across a larger range of records has allowed access to other pertinent records, and offered a broader access-point to this space. Although these accounts record criminal narratives, the sample includes only those individuals whose presence was not directly related to a criminal act. Individuals accused of breaking into the house through the kitchen, of stealing items from the kitchen, or of conducting other criminal activity in this space have been excluded. Likewise, members of the household or neighbourhood who were only present in this space as a result of the extraordinary response to illegal activity – for example searching for stolen goods, apprehending a suspect, or questioning a prisoner, have also been excluded.²¹⁰

This is not to suggest that criminal activity does not reveal important understandings about the eighteenth-century kitchen and its uses. The prevalence of the act of coining in this space, for example, draws attention to the kitchen as a functional site with important facilities for the production of illegal tender. Likewise, the frequent use of the kitchen as a site of black-market barter and trade suggests it might have been beyond the usual means of community and household surveillance. There is also much to be learned about the relationship between servants and the space of the kitchen from the crimes they committed within it. Kitchens were frequently the site of arguments between servants, and although it is only the most dramatic and vicious

²⁰⁸ See introduction, p. 47.

²⁰⁹ Although antiquated spellings pose a significant challenge to word searches, the only alternative spelling I came across was ‘kitchin’ which typically refers to a person’s name and not a domestic space. There is one example of ‘kitchin’ referring to a kitchen in the sample, but it concerns only the searching of it after a crime had taken place and would have been excluded from the sample. Searching for ‘kitchen’ should, therefore, access the majority of references to this space in the period under consideration. For ‘kitchin’ see *OBP*, December 1788, trial of John Jarvis (t17881210-90).

²¹⁰ Deciding between ‘incidental’ and ‘criminal’ action often depends on the elusive motivation of the actor. Clues were sought in witness statements and in the judgements of the court.

of these exchanges that ended in the court of the Old Bailey, they are significant nonetheless. In 1744, for example, the servant maid Elizabeth Seville was accused of fatally wounding her fellow servant Mary Cartwright in the kitchen of her mistress' house in Westminster. Ann Sandford, the mistress of the house, recalled that she was in her kitchen when the assault happened, that the two maids had been 'quarrelling all morning' and 'scolding with one another' when Seville, who was ironing by the kitchen fire, lashed out at Cartwright and hit her across the head with the iron that was in her hand. The quarrel, according to their mistress, originated in a disagreement about their domestic duties; she told the court that it was about 'drying a gown; the deceased had put a gown to the fire, and the prisoner pushed it away, and that made the deceased angry'.²¹¹ Cases such as this reveal the discord and jealousies that could arise *between* servants in the kitchen- an important corrective to recent scholarship which tends to emphasise conflict and differences between employer and employee and between the powerful and powerless. They also suggest the very real danger inherent in a space in which tempers could rise and sharp or heavy utensils were at hand. If Sandford shared the space of the kitchen with her servant maids, other crimes committed by servants in the kitchen suggest it could be understood by them as a space away from the prying eyes of their masters and mistresses; servants frequently stowed stolen or illicitly acquired goods in the kitchen - items were deposited in cupboards, hidden in drains or beneath coppers or kitchen stairs.²¹² It was not only servants, but their masters and mistresses who recognised that the kitchen offered the opportunity for the clandestine collections of objects by their servants; the kitchen was a room that was frequently searched and re-searched by masters and mistresses looking for the loot they were sure their servants had stolen. Another study might usefully explore the criminal activity of the kitchen to deepen our understanding of the meanings of this space.²¹³ For the purposes of this chapter, however, and in order to access an understanding of this space that was not dictated by the crimes committed within it, these activities have been excluded from the analysis.

²¹¹ *OBP*, December 1744, trial of Elizabeth Seville (t17441205-33). For other examples of servants quarreling in kitchens see *OBP*, October 1734, trial of Elizabeth Pew, (t17341016-16); *OBP*, April 1786, trial of David Jones (t17860426-32).

²¹² For examples of stolen goods hidden about the kitchen see: *OBP*, February 1754, trial of Sarah Prosser (t17540227-24); *OBP*, September 1782, trial of Charlotte Goodall, John Edmonds, Priscilla Goodall, Stephen Bouchett, (t17820911-51); *OBP*, October 1782, trial of Mary Ballentine, (t17821016-21); *OBP*, September 1790, trial of Rachel Dowling, (t17900915-30).

²¹³ On this see Pennell, *Birth of the English Kitchen*, p. 115.

The sample does not offer a representative or ‘random’ sample of the kitchens of Georgian London.²¹⁴ The records reflect those sites and times of day that coincided with criminal action; it is for this reason that the kitchens of ale houses, shops and pawnbrokers appear so prominently in the records, and that the evening routine of locking the kitchen windows and doors against burglars is so frequently reported. That these records are not representative of activity within the kitchen is confirmed by the fact that there are very few references to cooking – that prototypical kitchen activity – in the sample. Under the criteria set out by the sample 219 individuals were located in the space of the kitchen. Of these 219 individuals, it was possible to characterise 218 by their gender and 198 as either ‘servant’ or a ‘non servant’. Individuals were classified as servants when they identified themselves, or were described by others as a ‘servant’ or another occupational title – such as ‘maid’, ‘footman’ or ‘cook’. ‘Non servants’ were usually identified by their title and/or marital status, or by an occupational identity stated or alluded to. The sample confirms that on aggregate, the eighteenth-century kitchen was a relatively unsegregated space. It is certainly not the case that kitchens uniformly segregated women and servants from the rest of the household or from the wider world; men constituted 42 per cent of witnesses who appeared in the kitchen. Similarly, the kitchen cannot be understood simply as a parallel world of service ‘below stairs’; at least 49 per cent of the sample were identifiable as non servants. This non-servant group reveals something of the methodological challenges of the *Proceedings*. Much of the contextual information needed to identify and distinguish household relations is missing from the records. Where a householder appears at court alone, or with their spouse, it is difficult to know from the information provided whether or not they employed servants. Because of this it has not been possible to divide this ‘non servant’ group between those that employed servants and those that did not. This group, therefore, also includes lodgers, children, customers and other visitors to the house.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the sample reveals that the function of the kitchen varied according to the status of the householder and the size and trade of the house. For the poorest households, a kitchen might have offered the first building block in the construction of a home, and a site of retreat in times of economic hardship. Sarah and

²¹⁴ See introduction p.48.

Patrick Neale slept in the kitchen of a house near Long Acre in 1784, and Mrs Neale told the court: ‘we kept the kitchen for ourselves, and let the other part of the house’.²¹⁵ At the time of the trial Mrs Neale’s husband was in debtors’ prison and it seems likely that she contracted her living space around the kitchen as a way of making ‘shift’ after he had been imprisoned.²¹⁶ The facilities of the kitchen encouraged economic efficiency within the household; the same fire might be used to heat water for the wash, prepare food, and warm the room, but also to assist in a variety of economically productive tasks. The kitchen might be used to provide for lodgers installed elsewhere in the house, to take in washing, finishing or needlework, or to store or prepare produce sold at a stall or from a cart, for example. As Sara Pennell has suggested the kitchen could act as a ‘hub of economic labour *and* domestic chores’, and this was particularly the case for women.²¹⁷

Table 1. Individuals present in the kitchen from *OBP* sample 1782-1791

| | Servants | Non-servants | Unknown | Total |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Male | 35 | 50 | 7 | 92 |
| Female | 54 | 58 | 14 | 126 |
| Unknown | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 90 | 108 | 21 | 219 |

Who it was that was present in this space was related to the function and location of the house and the kitchen within it. In the houses of artisans and labourers, for example, the proximity to yards and workshops and the supply of water meant that the kitchen was a space where the master of the house and his apprentices were commonly to be found.²¹⁸ A witness identified only as ‘Blackbourn’ (but who was probably an apprentice), told the court he went into the kitchen of his master’s house on Chapel Street near Hyde Park ‘to get a pail of water’, and the milwright George

²¹⁵ *OBP*, July 1784, trial of Ann Foster, (t17840707-105). For other examples of this type of living arrangement see *OBP*, April 1788, trial of David Clary, Elizabeth Gombert, (t17880402-18); *OBP*, April 1786, trial of Joseph Yelland, Phebe Harris, Elizabeth Yelland, (t17860426-9).

²¹⁶ For the original use of the ‘economy of makeshifts’ see O. Hufton, *The Poor of Eighteenth-Century France*, (Oxford, 1974). For discussion see S. King and A. Tomkins (eds), *The Poor in England, 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts*, (Manchester, 2003).

²¹⁷ Pennell, *Birth of the English Kitchen*, p. 114.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.8, p. 45; 45. Also see K. Dannehl, K. Dannehl, ‘“To Families Furnishing Kitchens”: Domestic Utensils and their Use in the Eighteenth-Century Home’ in D. Hussey and M. Ponsonby (eds), *Buying for the Home: Shopping for the Domestic from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, (Farnham, 2008), p. 38, p. 30.

Wright testified that he had been ‘below in the kitchen cleaning my tools’ when his house was broken into in 1785.²¹⁹ More explicitly still, Thomas Beaumont, a bookbinder who lived at No. 46 Eagle Street on Red Lion Square told the court that on Saturday the 26th September 1795, he was ‘at work in the kitchen’ whilst his wife was ‘cleaning down the kitchen stairs’.²²⁰ Whether the work that Beaumont was employed in was related to his bookbinding business is not clear in the record.²²¹ In public and victualling houses, the kitchen performed a more obvious commercial function and was often accessible to customers as well as other members of the household. The public-facing nature of kitchens in households such as this is suggested by the examples of masters, mistresses and their servants drawing pints and serving customers from their kitchens. Elizabeth de la Roche, the mistress of the Green Man in Wellclose Square near East Smithfield, for example, told the court that William Beatie was a customer at the house and ‘came into the kitchen out of the yard and drank some beer’.²²²

In the houses of shopkeepers too, the close connection between the ground floor kitchen and the shop meant that a variety of household members were to be found in the kitchen throughout the working day. Stephen Foulkes, who was probably a butcher or grocer told the court he was ‘in my kitchen backwards’ when he thought he ‘heard somebody in my shop’ and ‘turned round, and saw the prisoner take up a leg of pork’.²²³ Edward Harris, a broker who lived in Sun Street near Bishopsgate, similarly recalled for the court that he had ‘returned out of my shop into the back kitchen’ but ‘was called out, to know if I had sold a looking-glass’ from the shop.²²⁴ This relationship is perhaps most clearly demonstrated when customers accidentally entered the kitchen from the street or yard, and where the kitchen itself became a site of business and of bartering. Robert East told the court that he was sitting in the kitchen of his sister’s pawnbroker’s shop one morning when two people entered to

²¹⁹ *OBP*, July 1783, trial of William Downes, (t17830723-56); *OBP*, February 1785, trial of Rose Fitzpatrick, (t17850223-21). Also see *OBP*, February 1786, trial of Francis Phipps, (t17860222-53).

²²⁰ *OBP*, October 1795, trial of Robert Cooper, (t17951028-23). This is not in the sample, but is a useful example.

²²¹ For another example of a bookbinder in the kitchen see *OBP*, June 1788, trial of William Jewlin, (t17880625-11).

²²² *OBP*, July 1783, trial of William Beatie, (t17830723-38). Also see *OBP*, January 1732, trial of Peter Noakes, (t17320114-41). On this see Pennell, *The Birth of the English Kitchen*, p. 44.

²²³ *OBP*, February 1791, trial of James Whitechurch, (t17910216-27).

²²⁴ *OBP*, September 1791, trial of Elijah Collyer, (t17910914-37). Also see *OBP*, February 1790, trial of George William Barbor, (t17900224-5); *OBP*, April 1781, trial of John Okey, (t17810425-4).

pledge their goods. This, he claimed, was not unusual, ‘many people make a mistake and take the kitchen for the shop’.²²⁵ Accessible, street-facing, and occupied by various members of the household and their customers, kitchens such as this were certainly not the sequestered sites ‘below stairs’ depicted by contemporaries.

The variety of kitchen arrangements not only altered the social dynamics of this space, but the activities expected of it. Servants’ kitchen experiences varied according to the household in which they served. Where kitchens were accessible to lodgers and members of the public, servants could be subject to their demands as well as those of the master and mistress of the house. The statement of Mary Daly, who identified herself as the housekeeper in a public house in St. Giles, reveals the way in which servants were expected to tend to visitors who found their way in to the kitchen. She told the court she knew nothing about a theft, but that ‘the prisoner came to me in the kitchen, and asked me for a knife to cut some stirrups’.²²⁶ Similarly, when an early-morning visitor called into the kitchen of the King’s Arms in Chelsea, Robert Woolford (who stated only that he ‘lived’ at the house, but seems to have acted as a servant or a waiter), cleaned his boots, bought him new stockings and took his horse to the farrier for him.²²⁷ Where the kitchen was in close proximity to the shop, the work of the kitchen was consistently interrupted by the demands of trade, and vice versa. The statement of Sarah Cope, who helped out in her mother’s chandler’s shop, reveals something of the simultaneity of domestic and trade tasks demanded in households such as this. She stated:

I was in the chandler's shop, the prisoner came in and asked me if I sold watches... I said, yes, Sir; I rang the bell for my father... my father ...came out and asked the prisoner to step backwards with him in the work-shop; my father went in first and he followed him, and I went into the kitchen to cut bread and butter for tea; the shop lies on one side of the kitchen, we go through the kitchen into the shop, I sat opposite the shop-door; ...my father went up stairs, and came down again in five or ten minutes, it may be more or less I cannot say, I had rang the bell for him to come to tea; I never removed from my seat till I rang the bell, and nobody was in the kitchen but myself.²²⁸

²²⁵ *OBP*, October 1786, trial of Joseph Wright, John Lawson, Edward Mills, (t17861025-4).

²²⁶ *OBP*, December 1783, trial of John Barnett, (t17831210-18).

²²⁷ *OBP*, April 1786, trial of George Woodward, (t17860426-6).

²²⁸ *OBP*, September 1768, trial of John Farrow, (t17680907-20).

Although there is no mention by Cope or her father of a live-in domestic, this movement between kitchen and shop was common for those who served in households such as this, and will be explored more in chapter four.²²⁹

As well as a facilitator of economic activity, the kitchen was an important space for the consumption of food and drink, and there are several examples in the sample of families gathered together in the kitchen at mealtimes. Elizabeth and John Sullivan, for example, lived in a house in Glass House Yard just off the Minories with their two children, and were ‘sitting by the kitchen door eating our supper’ on a ‘very windy and rainy night’ in November 1787.²³⁰ It is not clear whether the Sullivan household employed a live-in servant, but it is possible that the servant too could have sat in the kitchen to eat (and serve) their supper.²³¹ Mealtimes brought many households together around the kitchen table at particular points in the day, and the warmth and light of the kitchen fire provided a space for gathering into the night. John M’Farlan, a silversmith and his wife, for example, were ‘sitting in the kitchen backwards, even with my shop’ when a thief broke in at ten at night in March 1785.²³² Although, again, it is not clear whether the M’Farlan’s employed a live-in servant, other examples suggest servants could be present at these nocturnal gatherings too. Elizabeth Wood, the maid of a widow who let out lodgings on Nightingale Lane near Smithfield, told the court she was sitting in the kitchen of her mistress’s house ‘talking by the fire side’ with her mistress and two lodgers in October 1785.²³³

Although the ritualistic significance of dining has long been acknowledged, the focus on the symbolism of ‘front stage’ diners in halls, parlours and dining rooms has been preferred over ‘back stage’ domestic activities. Although very little information about particular dining arrangements were recorded at court, the inventory evidence confirms that the kitchen was an important alternative space for gathering at table. A common arrangement appears to have been for kitchens to have at least one table – sometimes referred to as a dining table – as well as a ‘pillar and claw’ – sometimes

²²⁹ Also see *OBP*, January 1765, trial of Robert Griffin (t17650116-17).

²³⁰ *OBP*, December 1787, trial of George Smith, (t17871212-59). Also see *OBP*, April 1789, trial of Daviel Sewell, (t17890422-51).

²³¹ See *OBP*, January 1783, trial of Daniel Macginniss, (t17830117-1).

²³² *OBP*, April 1785, trial of John Thompson, other Wrinkle, (t17850406-31).

²³³ *OBP*, October 1785, trial of Charles Kinross, (t17851019-62).

referred to either as ‘claw’ or ‘pillar’.²³⁴ The multi-purposes uses to which a kitchen table might be put are suggested in the inventory sample. The ‘deal table with a drawer’ in the kitchen of Thomas Robinson’s kitchen in 1772 may well have been eaten off, but may also have been an important item for kitchen storage.²³⁵ Similarly, the mahogany table listed in William Blachford’s kitchen in 1773 was probably used as a work space for much of the time with the ‘chapping board’, ‘tea trays’ and ‘spice box’ listed alongside it cleared away when dinner was ready.²³⁶ Although the frequency of ‘oval’ dining tables suggest a relatively democratic eating culture, distinction was clearly marked through seating arrangements, as well as the timing of food consumption and food on offer – as Tim Meldrum and Amanda Flather have suggested.²³⁷ The inventories reveal a variety of seating arrangements. In a number of houses the similarities across the seating suggest they may have been purchased as a set.²³⁸ James Blatch’s kitchen, for example, listed ‘Six Chairs with Leather Seats’, and James Waller’s kitchen included ‘six fan backed chairs, with leather seats, and brass nailed’.²³⁹ Elsewhere the social hierarchy was demonstrated through the allocation of a small number of higher status – and probably more comfortable – seats. John Sears’ kitchen had six wood-bottomed chairs and one ‘Elbow Chair’; George Perring’s had four wooden and ‘rush’ chairs and two ‘Windsor Chairs’; and Elizabeth Sowton’s had an ‘Elbow Cane Chair and Cushion’ as well as three leather chairs, for example.²⁴⁰ If these chairs were occupied by the head of the household, an upper servant or guest, other seating served to mark the opposite. Francis Gibson’s kitchen for example, had ‘one old stool’ as well as six ‘wood’ chairs in the kitchen, and James Waller’s had a stool as well as the ‘fan backed’ chairs mentioned above.²⁴¹ This seating arrangement registered the social hierarchy within the kitchen,

²³⁴ See appendix 2.

²³⁵ Thomas Robinson, 1772.

²³⁶ William George Blachford, 1793, E140/6/1, NA, GM transcript.

²³⁷ Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 145; Flather, *Gender and Space*, pp. 63-64. As above, pp. 18-19.

²³⁸ These items may have made their way into kitchens from elsewhere in the house. Christopher Gilbert’s catalogue of ‘back-stairs’ furniture includes a number of items that were transferred downstairs once they had become obsolete upstairs. An early seventeenth-century dining table at Carlton Towers in Yorkshire was extended three feet by the estate carpenter and re-used as a dresser in the game larder. Similarly, the top of a japanned pier table from Meols Hall now in Lancashire was re-grained with a traditional oak finish before it was transported into the kitchen, Gilbert, *An Exhibition on Back-Stairs Furniture from Country Houses*, (Leeds, 1971), not paginated. On purchasing for the kitchen see Pennell, *The Birth of the British Kitchen*, p. 198; Dannehl, ‘To Families Furnishing Kitchens’ pp. 27-46; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp. 267-270.

²³⁹ James Waller, 1782.

²⁴⁰ John Sears, 1800; George Perring, 1780, C108/83, NA, GM transcript; Elizabeth Sowton, 1753,

²⁴¹ Frances Gibson, 1745; James Waller, 1782.

and reveals the different posture and pattern of use expected from different individuals within it.²⁴² Although hidden in the records, the nuances of these domestic arrangements would have been obvious and significant to contemporaries. In smaller households, eating and gathering at the kitchen table was probably a response to spatial limitations, but the kitchen also served as a less formal space for family and friends to eat and gather together in larger households. Amanda Vickery has suggested that the kitchen was the first resort for ‘common visitors’ in the Shackleton household in Lancashire, but was also the space in which the master of the house dined with male visitors, and drank with his workers.²⁴³ The function of the kitchen door is explored later in the chapter, but it is clear that in larger households kitchens could register the informality and openness prized of genteel householders at the end of the eighteenth century -although we might argue that the benevolent affability of the master in the kitchen might be as contrived a social performance as the carefully choreographed ‘polite’ behaviour upstairs. Access to the kitchen might also have registered familiarity and intimacy with the household and its servants. When Thomas Kinder visited the large house of Frances Fortescue in Tottenham, for example, he told the court: ‘I went to the kitchen door and window to get the servants to come and open the door to me, being intimate in the family I did not ring; I went to the kitchen window’.²⁴⁴

If in Shackleton’s house in Lancashire and the large house in Tottenham, male access to, and presence in, the kitchen suggested intimacy, ease, and openness, the absence of the male householder was a striking feature of the sample. Absence is, of course, a difficult thing to record. In 2003, after nearly thirty years exploring the relationship of the *Proceedings* to the court proceedings and to the ‘truth’ of the events recorded, John Langbein reiterated his 1974 conclusion that ‘if the report says something happened, it did; if the ... report does not say it happened it still might have’.²⁴⁵

There are indications, however, that the relative absence of male householders in the kitchen in the sample reflects a more general nonattendance in the kitchen- in larger middling households at least. Occasionally, this comes directly from the mouths of

²⁴² G. Adamson, ‘The Case of the Missing Footstool: Reading the Absent Object’ in Harvey, *History and Material Culture*, esp. pp. 201-203.

²⁴³ Vickery, *Gentleman’s Daughter*, p. 206.

²⁴⁴ *OBP*, September 1782, trial of Charlotte Goodall, John Edmonds, Priscilla Goodall, (t17820911-51).

²⁴⁵ J. Langbein, *Adversary Criminal Trial*, p. 25.

men who appeared before the court. In 1787 Matthew Edmonson, an upholsterer who owned two houses on Haymarket and Oxendon Street in fashionable Piccadilly, told the court explicitly: ‘I very seldom go down to the kitchen’.²⁴⁶ On other occasions, too, servants recalled their sole occupancy of the kitchen: Mary Smith, the servant to one Mr Cook who lived on Wells Street, also in Piccadilly, told the court ‘my master never comes into the kitchen; nobody goes into the kitchen but myself’.²⁴⁷ Other kitchen absences are revealed when the records reveal the simultaneous domestic practices of different members of the household. Elizabeth Hall was a servant to James Wilson who lived in Great Queen Street near Lincoln’s Inn Fields, and claimed that about midday on the 20th March 1788, she ‘was the only one in the kitchen; but there was my mistress and the children up stairs’. Her master, James Wilson, did not appear at court, but Richard Mitchell, his footman, recalled that he was ‘not at home when this affair happened’.²⁴⁸ Whether or not Smith and Hall’s statements about their solitude in the kitchen was entirely accurate, the perception of both servant maids about their isolation in the kitchen is significant, and contrasts markedly with the scenes of disruption and disorder evoked by contemporary representations of scenes ‘below stairs’, and those of solidarity and conviviality suggested in the records of smaller households.

How, then are we to make sense of this space? It is clear that in neither small trading households nor larger middling households can the kitchen be understood as a segregated space- although the presence of other members of the household could differ dramatically between households. Rather than understanding the kitchen (even in larger households) as a ‘sequestered site’ as segregated, separate and isolated, the kitchen might be better understood as a ‘contact zone’. First outlined by Mary Louise Platt, the contact zone refers to ‘social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power’.²⁴⁹ Although the concept was coined to think-through encounters between colonisers and colonised, it has also been used by Platt to describe the meeting of cultures in a different context- the classroom. Although the ‘cultures’ imagined in the classroom are less geographically and historically distinct than those of colonisation, they might

²⁴⁶ *OBP*, January 1787, trial of John Fatt, John Vandereast, (t17870110-8).

²⁴⁷ *OBP*, October 1786, trial of Thomas Fox, (t17861025-111).

²⁴⁸ *OBP*, April 1798, trial of Fordia Shepherd, otherwise Forder Shepherd, (t17980412-41).

²⁴⁹ M. L. Platt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 1992 (Abingden, 2008), p. 8; Platt, ‘The Arts of the Contact Zone’, *Profession*, (1991), pp. 33-40.

be similarly complex. Difference might involve social identities founded on age, gender and social status, but also relate to relatively site-specific roles adopted in particular locations or according to specific social dynamics; the expectation of knowledge, authority and social control might be particularly relevant here. I do not mean to locate household members simply in two opposing and dichotomous camps or ‘cultures’. The social difference between master and servant varied widely, and was mediated through familial connection, long experience, and personal circumstance. In larger households, the social difference between domestics could be similarly complex, and altered according to gender, age, competence and experience. An understanding of the kitchen as contact zone allows us to imagine the kitchen as a site of all these interactions, but also to acknowledge that one of the parties (usually) had an upper hand. Although the most recent work on the early modern domestic space has drawn attention to the frequent interaction of household members, in-depth examinations of the mechanisms and negotiations of such co-presence have not been forthcoming. Severe breaches in domestic relations have been explored by scholars such as Patty Seleski and Paula Humfrey, but everyday exchanges in kitchens tend to have remained hidden.²⁵⁰ Rather than understanding the kitchen as a domestic aberration –something to be hidden, ignored or bypassed in histories of the domestic space, this chapter recognises that the importance of the kitchen to the domestic project. Rather than a back stage zone, in which the ‘true’ identity of servants was revealed, this chapter acknowledges the performance of social roles within this space, and the negotiation of authority, obedience, and expertise that went on with it. By thinking about the kitchen as a place of contact, it is possible to explore the ways in which social relations were forged within the eighteenth-century domestic space not only through distance but through interaction. Except in the most elaborate of households, there were particular moments and activities which demanded ‘contact’ between servants and other members of the household. In most eighteenth-century households, the kitchen was an important site of these encounters.

The kitchen was the space that servants were expected to be found and where they were sought out by other members of the household. The sample suggests that the

²⁵⁰ Seleski, ‘Domesticity is in the Streets’; Seleski, ‘A Mistress, A Mother and a Murderess Too: Elizabeth Brownrigg and the Social Construction of an Eighteenth Century Mistress’ in K. Kittredge, (ed.), *Lewd and Notorious: Female Transgression in the Eighteenth Century*, 2003, (Michigan, 2006), pp. 210-232. Humfrey, *Experience of Domestic Service*. On this silence see Pennell, *The Birth of the English Kitchen*, p. 119.

kitchen functioned as a site in which servants might be sought out in the case of wrongdoing. Both masters and mistresses had an important role in the disciplining of their servants, and entered the kitchen to chastise the servants in their charge. For the masters of larger households, this appears to have been limited to serious breaches in the domestic order. When Paul Cauldwell was told by a man servant that the maid of the house had delivered an illegitimate child and concealed it in the necessary, he did not hesitate to enter the kitchen to question her; he told the court: ‘I went into the kitchen, and asked her what she had been doing’.²⁵¹ Although John Wilkinson was more reluctant to enter the kitchen of his house after suspecting his footman of a variety of silver plate, he eventually sought him out there. Wilkinson told the court ‘I waited twenty minutes [for the footman to return to the parlour]; he did not come up; I then rang the bell; nobody answered; I went into his room; he was not there; I went down into the kitchen, below his room, and enquired for him.’²⁵² The multiple strategies pursued by Wilkinson to retrieve the footman from the kitchen suggest his presence in the kitchen was not a common occurrence, and we can imagine that the presence of the master of the house at the kitchen door must have been a jarring experience for those within it. Mistresses too made the journey into the kitchen to discipline their servants, although the sample suggests that this might be more closely related to the day-to-day practice of domestic management and instruction. When a visitor of Isabelle Kendall’s complained that the bread the servant had brought in from the kitchen looked ‘as if Children had been biting it’, Kendall called her servant to her (presumably in the parlour), but then followed her into the kitchen. Kendall told the court:

I called my Servant; said I, Dorothy, what Sort of Bread and Butter is this? You have not cut it as it should be; I spoke to her in a mild Manner... and shewed her the Bread and Butter, said I, is this fit to bring into Company, said she, What is the Matter with it?’ It is well enough. I went into the Kitchen, and asked her how she could serve me so?²⁵³

²⁵¹ *OBP*, May 1774, trial of Jane Cornforth, (t17740518-23). The kitchen also seems to have been a space where servants were searched, see, for example, *OBP*, October 1788, trial of Elizabeth Metcalff, (t17881022-29).

²⁵² *OBP*, February 1790, trial of John Brown, (t17900224-11).

²⁵³ *OBP*, October 1743, trial of Dorothy Christian, (t17431012-35).

The kitchen provided a space away from the visitor where the incredulity of the mistress at the behaviour of her maid could be expressed, domestic instruction offered, and the behavioural expectations of ‘company’ addressed.

Masters and mistresses of larger middling households were also present in the kitchen as part of a daily routine of inspection and safeguarding. The *Proceedings* confirm that the kitchen door was frequently the site of break-in by burglars, and that the securing of the domestic boundaries against such thieves – particularly over night – was a key concern of householders and servant alike. The mistress’ responsibilities over the keys which secured the boundaries of the house are well known, but masters took an interest in the securing of the house each night too.²⁵⁴ Matthew Edmonson’s statement that he was ‘seldom’ in the kitchen was qualified by the statement ‘except in the evening to see if all is safe’.²⁵⁵ Edmonson’s presence in the kitchen at the end of the day might be understood as a physical marking-out of his territory and his responsibility over the security of his property. Edward Cockerill, a chair maker who lived near Moorfields similarly told the court that although a ‘boy’ fastened the house each evening, he ‘saw them all fast’.²⁵⁶ The closing of shutters, the double-checking of locks, and the casting an eye over the kitchen each night might be understood as an authoritative performance of patriarchal responsibility over the house as a whole, and, perhaps, as an attempt to destabilise any misplaced sense of ownership over the kitchen by his servants. A similar performance of domestic responsibility can be read in the statements of mistresses who were present in the kitchen to replace and store goods. Elizabeth Lans, for example, told the court she went into the kitchen to put away a variety of plate, that she had seen it ‘safe over night; I locked the closet, and put the key under a tea urn, close to the closet, on the dressed; it was covered with a green cloth’.²⁵⁷ As with the act of securing the kitchen

²⁵⁴ For examples of the mistress locking the kitchen door see *OBP*, October 1790, trial of Edward Timms, (t17901027-57); *OBP*, September 1788, trial of Ann Berry, (t17880910-26); *OBP*, January 1784, trial of Richard Bryan, (t17840114-72). For example of servant maid locking kitchen door, watched over by her mistress see *OBP*, February 1784, trial of John Davison, Benjamin Barlow, Daniel Love, (t17840225-5). On this see Vickery, ‘Englishman’s Home’, pp. 161-162; Vickery, ‘World of Goods’, p. 288; Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 47.

²⁵⁵ *OBP*, January 1787, trial of John Fatt, John Vandereast, (t17870110-8).

²⁵⁶ *OBP*, January 1790, trial of Ann Harvey, Ann Jackson, (t17900113-2). Also see *OBP*, July 1787, trial of George Lane, (t17870711-86).

²⁵⁷ *OBP*, September 1789, trial of William Clark, (t17890909-31). Also see *OBP*, September 1766, trial of John Webb, (t17660903-53); *OBP*, December 1790, trial of Mary Hawkins, (T17901208-31); *OBP*, October 1789, trial of Jane Edwards, (t17891028-9); *OBP*, July 1783, trial of William Beatie, (t17830723-38); *OBP*, February 1794, trial of Dennis Mahony, Catherine Harrington, (t17940219-54).

door, the act of locking away goods allowed the mistress of the house to demonstrate her responsibility over domestic goods, and to perform her authority over the space of the kitchen.

The sample confirms that mistresses were frequently to be found in the space of the kitchen. Although understanding the socio-economic status of individuals who appeared before the court is not straightforward (particularly for women), the sample suggests that this was as true of those who employed a number of domestic staff and inhabited large houses that could easily have accommodated them elsewhere, as it was for women who lived in much smaller dwellings with little domestic assistance. The elite status of one Lady Charlotte Burgoyne who was reported in the kitchen of her house in April 1793 and another mistress valued by one witness as worth ‘ten thousand pounds’ and described by another as the wife of ‘an independent man of great property’ is clear enough.²⁵⁸ Understanding the co-habitation of the kitchen is more difficult. Traditionally, the presence of mistress and maid in the kitchen is understood to have bred familiarity, whereas the distant mistress is thought to reflect the social distance between the two, and the association of the kitchen as its occupants as ‘workers’. Although the proximity of the mistress was recognised by the authors of domestic advice to have an invaluable educative function for the servant maid, it is not the case that the presence of the mistress was necessarily desirable for the servant; as Jane Hamlett has suggested, ‘such practical closeness did not necessarily mean greater warmth or intimacy between the two’.²⁵⁹ In order to understand more fully the ‘contact’ between women in the spaces of the kitchen it is necessary to explore in more detail why exactly they were both present in this space.

A brief, but significant, mention in the sample suggests that mistresses were present in the kitchen to wind up the kitchen clock, a potent demonstration of their control over the shape of servants’ days.²⁶⁰ Lorna Weatherill, Sara Pennell and others have

²⁵⁸ *OBP*, April 1793, trial of Francis Morgan, (t17930410-84); *OBP*, December 1789, trial of Ann Phillips, (t17891209-80).

²⁵⁹ Hamlett, *Material Relations*, p. 57.

²⁶⁰ *OBP*, July 1771, trial of Ann Lawson, Sarah Hirst, (t17710703-55). Marcus Wood has recognised the significance of this act in his research on the slave accommodation in Thomas Jefferson’s plantation; the visitor is welcomed into the kitchens at Monticello with a statement from a former slave: ‘Mr Jefferson never went into the kitchen except to wind up the clock’, M. Wood, ‘Refurbishment, Responsibility, and Historical Memory in Monticello’s Slave “Dependencies”’, in R. Hörmann and G. Meckenthun (eds), *Human Bondage in the Cultural Contact Zone: Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Slavery and its Discourses*, (Münster, 2010), p. 197.

suggested the significance of the kitchen clock in the history of the material culture of the domestic space, and suggested the penetration of clock-time into the household upsets the dichotomy, evident since E.P. Thompson, between the time-discipline associated with the factory and productive work, and the supposedly ‘traditional’ task-orientated rhythm of domestic labour.²⁶¹ Although clocks did not appear particularly prominently in the inventory sample, the *Proceedings* confirms that hanging a watch up over the hearth or on the back of a chair was a common kitchen practice.²⁶² There is much we do not know about the ways in which the daily routines of servants were ordered, but recent scholarship on the increasingly time-specific instructions in eighteenth-century cookery books suggests the kitchen clock played an important part in that process. The top-down imposition of clock-based discipline on recalcitrant servants does not, however, do justice to the complex ways in which temporal structures were understood and made use of within the domestic space. Although the clock may well have been used to discipline servants, it also assisted them in the time-keeping necessary for particular kitchen activities and may have been used by servants to gain skills and experience. Servants themselves might also be sticklers for the precision of domestic routine run by the clock, and carefully watch over the comings and goings of members of the household from kitchen windows and doorways.²⁶³ The clock, then, does more than simply suggest the obedience of servants to the temporal structures of their masters and mistresses, and hints at what Pennell has termed the ‘calibrated kitchen’ and the ways in which the kitchen was integrated into the timetables of the rest of the household and the metropolis.²⁶⁴ Meal times, for example, might be a moment in which the temporal

²⁶¹ Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, p. 25, p. 88; Pennell, *The Birth of the Kitchen*, pp. 97-99. See E. P. Thompson, ‘Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism’, *P&P*, No. 38, (1967), pp. 56-97. For critique of Thompson see Davidoff, ‘Rationalization’, pp. 135-136; P. Glennie and N. Thrift, ‘Reworking E.P. Thompson’s ‘Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism’, *Time & Society*, Vol. 5, No. 3, (1996), pp. 275 -299.

²⁶² For examples of clocks from the inventories see: William Armroid, 1773, Thomas Marriot, 1779, LMA, ACC/0358/001, GM transcript; Thomas Robinson, 1772; William Chenery, 1785, C108/ 367, NA, GM transcript; Nicholas Browning, 1800. For a servant winding up a watch that was left in the kitchen see *OBP*, September 1758, trial of Edward Gee, (t17580913-20).

²⁶³ For examples of servant timekeepers see *OBP*, April 1793, trial of Matthew Lowthorp (t17930410-90); *OBP*, July 1766, trial of Elizabeth Wood (t17660702-36).

²⁶⁴ Pennell, *The Birth of the English Kitchen*, pp. 97-99.

priorities of the master of the house were usurped by domestic ones, and the householder was forced to wait for dinner to be served.²⁶⁵

Although many female witnesses were present in kitchens labouring and managing domestic tasks, it is not easy to decipher whether these women employed a servant who was labouring alongside them or not.²⁶⁶ When the simultaneous actions of mistress and maid were recorded at court, the mistress's presence in the kitchen appears to have been more time-limited than that of her maid (or maids). Mistresses might be present in the kitchen to send their servants on errands, or otherwise request their assistance. The servant Sarah Solomons told the court that her mistress entered to kitchen and 'sent out for some oil', for example, and Sarah Hedley, who lived in a house in Pimlico near Ranelagh Gardens told the court 'I went into the kitchen about five o'clock, as near as I can guess, I was going to send my servant, Mary Shannon, of an errand'.²⁶⁷ The expectation that female servants be found in these spaces is clear in these records, and is also evident in households where the mistress was at 'work' elsewhere in the house. Francis Dawson was tending the bar of the White Lion in Islington when a 'gentlemen came in to order some pork chops', and she 'went out of the bar to look for the maid servant to come and do them; I went to the kitchen, she was not there, and I ran upstairs, I immediately came down and looking into the kitchen'.²⁶⁸ If the presence of mistresses in the kitchen was more task-orientated than their servants, it was also more time-limited. Although Sarah Hedley was briefly in the kitchen to order her servant on an errand, she spent much of the day upstairs with her husband and their guests watching their children dance. Although Hedley's sister also came into the kitchen, it was for a similarly time-limited activity; to fetch a plate of bread and butter, and later to bring what she called the 'better tea things' from the parlour in the kitchen to be refilled.²⁶⁹ Similarly, although Charlotte Wright, the mistress of a lodging house near Lincoln's Inn Fields

²⁶⁵ On the negotiation of dinner time see *OBP*, December 1786, trial of John Bone, (t17861213-125); *OBP*, September 1778, trial of John Jones, (t17780916-47); *OBP*, April 1759, trial of Edward More (t17590425-10). For an example of an argument between a husband and wife caused by the lateness of dinner see *OBP*, April 1786, trial of John Simpson, (t17860426-42). On the time commitment and coordinated necessitated by food preparation see Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, p. 147.

²⁶⁶ On mistresses working alongside their servants in kitchens see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, pp. 143-144; Pennell, *Birth of the English Kitchen*, pp. 116-117.

²⁶⁷ *OBP*, July 1783, trial of Sarah Jacobs, (t17820723-103); *OBP*, February 1798, trial of William Sheppard, (t17980214-26).

²⁶⁸ *OBP*, December 1793, trial of George Wagginham, (t17931204-44).

²⁶⁹ *OBP*, February 1798, trial of William Sheppard, (t17980214-26). On distinction between 'best' and 'common' see Vickery, 'World of Goods', p. 284.

put away a table cloth in the kitchen after breakfast, her servant was a much more sustained kitchen presence; she told the court that she had spent the entire day in the kitchen ‘at work’ on two gowns whilst watching over the bricklayers and their labourers who were demolishing the kitchen range.²⁷⁰ These acts of kitchen commissioning demonstrated the mistress’ managerial might, and positioned her as a figure of domestic authority with responsibility over the domestic economy.²⁷¹ The exchange of specie between mistress and maid appears particularly significant. Sarah Solomons was handed a shilling as she went out to fetch the oil, and Mary Shannon received half a crown from Sarah Hedley to fetch the butter. The reckoning of kitchen accounts might also take place in kitchens, and brought a variety of the most genteel ladies into this space. Moriah Harper, who was a cook in the household of Lady Burgoyne, for example, told the court that she ‘was in the kitchen and my lady and the governess, my lady was writing a bill of fare out’.²⁷² These kitchen exchanges demonstrate the ‘contact’ between mistress and maid, and reiterate the importance of the kitchen as a site in which the domestic economy was managed and maintained.

If male householders in larger households appeared in the kitchen to ‘see if all is safe’ and to discipline their servants, they were also there for another reason- to have their hair dressed. This activity, completely neglected in the historiography of the kitchen, offers important evidence of the ‘contact’ made between householders and their servants in this space. A rare material reminder of this activity survives in the inventory of Benjamin Tice in 1744 in which the assessor listed ‘a wig Block & stand’ amongst the rest of the kitchen paraphernalia.²⁷³ Hairdressing was one of the most frequent activities that male householders were engaged in according to the sample, its association with masculine good looks and vigour, with status and respectability suggests just how powerful a warehouse for self-presentation the domestic space could be in the period, and how significant the kitchen was in this

²⁷⁰ *OBP*, February 1794, trial of Dennis Mahony, Catharine Harrington, (t17940219-54).

²⁷¹ On the importance of these everyday acts of authority see K. Hassan Janson, R. Fiebranz, A. Östman, ‘Constitutive Tasks: Performances of Hierarchy and Identity’, in M. Ågren (ed.), *Making a Living, Making a Difference: Gender and Work in Early Modern Society*, (Oxford, forthcoming).

²⁷² *OBP*, April 1793, trial of Francis Morgan, (t17930410-84).

²⁷³ Benjamin Tice, 1745.

process.²⁷⁴ Charles Brannon, for example, dressed the hair of his lodger William Weston in the kitchen of his house on Noel Street near Saville Row on Christmas Day 1788.²⁷⁵ Samuel Ewbank, who kept a linen draper's shop in Moor Street near Soho Square, similarly recorded for the court that he 'went down in the kitchen to have my hair dressed' about eight o'clock in the morning on Monday the 31st March 1788.²⁷⁶ The statement of George Eades, a coach maker, records something of the frequency of this task. Eades told the court that he suspected his hairdresser's journeyman of theft after a silver tea spoon went missing from the kitchen the first time he attended him on the 5th April 1784. For 'several mornings' after this, Eades endeavoured to set a trap for the hairdresser, finally succeeding on the 13th April when the journeyman pocketed a silver tea spoon that Eades had laid out for him on the kitchen dresser. Eades' description of the theft suggests the complex ways in which kitchen priorities intersected and overlapped. He reported for the court that:

...on Tuesday the 13th, I laid a silver tea spoon on the dresser, it was washing time with our people, and the kitchen was in much disorder; I generally dress in the kitchen: as soon as he had dressed me, I went out of the kitchen as fast as I could, to give him an opportunity if he was so disposed, but I held the kitchen door in my hand to see what he did...I ordered the servants to keep out of the kitchen for that purpose, and I saw him very busily employed at the dresser.²⁷⁷

The fact it was necessary for Eades to order his servants out of the kitchen to catch the journeyman suggests that the dressing of hair and the work of the servants generally continued side-by-side. There are suggestions that by the end of the century it was preferable for hairdressing to be attended to in a separate space, or at least by different hands than those in contact with the food of the family. The author of *Domestic Management* advised a female cook in 1800 that she was '[b]y no means suffered to comb her head or dress it in the kitchen, unless you wish to have your meat full of hairs'.²⁷⁸ Importantly, it is servants' hair and not that of the master or mistress that is seen as unacceptable here.

²⁷⁴ See S. Vincent, 'Men's Hair: Managing Appearances in the Long Eighteenth Century', in H. Greig, J. Hamlett, L. Hannan, *Gender and Material Culture in Britain since 1600*, (London, 2016), pp. 49-67.

²⁷⁵ *OBP*, January 1789, trial of William Weston, (t17890114-44).

²⁷⁶ *OBP*, April 1788, trial of Charles Holton, (t17880402-70).

²⁷⁷ *OBP*, April 1784, trial of John Hall, (t17840421-69).

²⁷⁸ *Domestic Management*, p. 34.

The prevalence of hair dressing in the kitchen suggests the long-acknowledged association of the kitchen with the body. It is well known that the kitchen was the site of food preparation and medical recipes to nourish and repair the bodies of both servant and master, and that it was also associated with its dirt. The supply of water appears crucial here. Although the proliferation of domestic washing utensils and the dispersal of family members throughout larger households meant it was becoming less common for householders to wash themselves in the space of the kitchen, it was in the kitchen that hair was dressed, where clothes and bed linens were washed, where water was heated, and where bed pans, chamber pots and basins might be scoured, refreshed and refilled. That male servants frequent advertised their skills in hairdressing suggests that they might assist in the dressing of hair, and reveals the continued physical intimacy between master and servants.²⁷⁹

Other acts of physical intimacy are also evident in the kitchen. The kitchen was typically the closest domestic space to the house of office, and servants might assist the ‘night soil men’ with its emptying.²⁸⁰ Where chamber pots, close stools or commodes were not provided, the proximity of the yard encouraged a flow of people through the kitchen to attend to this necessary task. In the dark and cold of the night, the kitchen door appears to have offered distance enough; in 1794 whilst lodging at a house near Ratcliffe Highway to the east of London, John Scott told the court he ‘went to the kitchen door to make water’.²⁸¹ Although it was probably the yard that was used for the filthiest of domestic tasks, it was closely supported by the facilities of the kitchen.²⁸² The cleaning of the chamber pot is, perhaps, the most visceral example of the type of ‘contact’ made between servant and master in the kitchen. The testimony of the servant Ann Wright makes the unpleasant intimacy of kitchen practices evident. She told the court that:

I took away the chamber-pot on the Friday morning about 7 o’clock... When I went to empty it, it would not come clear with cold water, and I washed it

²⁷⁹ See, for example, ‘Wants a Place, Servant-Man, about Twenty-Seven, can shave and dress Wigs extremely well’, *Daily Advertiser*, (London, Friday, February 28, 1751) Issue 6597; ‘Wants a Place, A Young Man to serve a single Gentleman, or in a Family; can shave and dress Wigs, or Hair’, *Daily Advertiser*, (London, Saturday, March 7, 1752) Issue 6604.

²⁸⁰ *OBP*, October 1726, trial of Hester George (t17261012-8).

²⁸¹ *OBP*, October 1784, trial of Elizabeth Palmer, (t17841020-32).

²⁸² See, for example, *OBP*, December 1795, trial of Mary Thorpe, (t17951202-41).

with warm water. I did not take particular notice of it, it looked to be white and greasy...It stuck to the sides of the pot, and would not come off.²⁸³

If disgust, as William Ian Miller has suggested, is not only historically contingent, but tempered by emotions such as love and heightened by existing notions of anger and contempt, servants' experiences of these tasks must be located within their existing relationship with their master and mistress, and their past experiences of these tasks.²⁸⁴ It is significant that Wright suggests she 'did not take particular notice' of the excreta of her master whilst describing cleaning the pot. If at first this statement suggests a numbness generated by the routine enacting of tasks such as this, it might also be understood as a claim to domestic decorum, a reminder to those hearing her testimony of her discretion, the type of 'civil inattention' outlined by Goffman.²⁸⁵

The Kitchen Door

If the kitchen can be understood as a contact zone between householder and servant it also needs to be understood as a contact zone between household and metropolis.²⁸⁶ The kitchen played an important role in the appointment of household services, and many of the comings and goings of the kitchen were related to the maintenance of the house. The male 'non-servants' who were present in the sample included a carpenter, painter, and gentleman's agent, and the 'servants' included the servants of chimney sweeps, dustmen, hairdressers' journeymen, apprentices and warehouse boys.²⁸⁷ Although this broader 'servant' category complicates our understanding of the service relationship, their presence in the kitchen suggests an important function of this space often missing from historical analysis. It also reveals an important aspect of work of domestic servants that has not yet been adequately discussed; servants were expected to wait on, and assist these individuals whilst

²⁸³ *OBP*, May 1762, trial of Jane Sibson, (t17620526-18).

²⁸⁴ W. Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust*, (Cambridge, MA and London, 1997).

²⁸⁵ E. Goffman, *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*, 1971, (New Brunswick, 2010).

²⁸⁶ On this see Pennell, *Birth of the English Kitchen*, p. 113; Hamlett, *Material Relations*, p. 36.

²⁸⁷ For carpenter see *OBP*, June 1789, trial of Thomas Carol, (t17890603-84). For agent and painter see *OBP*, December 1789, trial of Henry Perch, (t17891208-79). For 'servant' chimney sweeps see *OBP*, July 1783, trial of William Downes, (t17830723-56); *OBP*, December 1783, trial of Thomas Wells, Bridget Smith, (t17831210-129). For 'servant' dustmen see *OBP*, January 1788, trial of John Miles, (t17880109-43).

watching-over the security of the household.²⁸⁸ If the kitchen door created labour for those working within the house, the facilities provided to it also suggest the ways in which servants' duties could be minimised though the resources of the metropolis; char women were hired to help with the wash, and help with cleaning the house, beer and small food was purchased from the local public house, and muffins, mackerel, oysters and a whole host of kitchen essentials were purchased from street sellers.²⁸⁹ The kitchen was an important site of negotiation between household and metropolis, and servants were central to these exchanges.

Where a separate kitchen door was easily accessible (from the area or the back of the house, for example) the identification with that entrance (rather than the front door) was an important way through which social status was performed on a daily basis. Elizabeth Moore, who took in starching, went to assist the maid Esther Mazey as her master's house near London Bridge and clearly intended to access the house via the kitchen. Moore told the court 'When I came first to the house, I went to the kitchen stairs and called out for Etty, the maid...I called out Etty; nobody answered; the servant not answering the call, I went to the street door and rang the house bell'.²⁹⁰ Enquirers repeatedly called at the kitchen rather than the front door to ask for work; the footman to one Mr Smith recalled that a man accused of theft had come to the house to enquire after a place, and that he 'told the prisoner to sit down in the kitchen' where he left him.²⁹¹ Similarly William James, who was accused of stealing a silk handkerchief and a pair of silver shoe buckles from the kitchen of one Thomas Withers in 1788 claimed that he had come to the kitchen door looking for work; 'I went to ask for a job of work, and there was nobody in the house, and I saw these things lay, and I took them through my distress and poverty'.²⁹² If commissions from the street to the front door could be watched over by householders, those to the kitchen door, yard or area were more difficult to police. The servants' delegation of work to kitchen-callers appears to have been a continued source of anxiety for

²⁸⁸ See, for example, *OBP*, June 1780, trial of Joseph Spencer, (t17800628-56); *OBP*, January 1788, trial of John Miles, (t17880109-43); *OBP*, December 1783, trial of Thomas Wells, Bridget Smith, (t17831210-129).

²⁸⁹ For charwomen see *OBP*, April 1783, trial of Thomas Wilson, (t17830430-57); *OBP*, December 1786, trial of Ann Powell, (t17861213-75). For washerwoman see *OBP*, April 1784, trial of Robert Ganley, (t17840421-7). For muffin seller see *OBP*, January 1790, trial of Robert Green, (t17900113-54), this is not in the sample but is a good example.

²⁹⁰ *OBP*, July 1795, trial of Ann Smith, (t17950701-29).

²⁹¹ *OBP*, December 1790, trial of William Thomas, (t17901208-25).

²⁹² *OBP*, September 1788, trial of William James, (t17880910-52).

masters and mistresses.²⁹³ The issue was not only that servants appointed others to do the work expected of them, but that these individuals posed a threat to the rest of the household. If these kitchen-callers were a frequent subject of satirical prints, the *Proceedings* reveal that anxieties about theft were well-founded. Far from a marginal space, peripheral to the domestic space, the kitchen emerges as a central site of exchange between the household and the market economy.

If the exchanges at the kitchen door and the act of kitchen commissioning suggest the centrality of this space to the market economy, the focus on the kitchen also reveals the ways in which charity and hospitality intersected with the economic life of the capital. Where payment for labour commissioned in the kitchen was made in food, the line between labour contract and charity is far from clear. A bricklayer's labourer, for example, who had come to do some 'work' on the house of Robert and Mary Payne in 1786 was provided with victuals by the maid and given a place to rest for the remainder of the day; he was recorded 'eating his bread and cheese' in the kitchen for 'three or four hours'.²⁹⁴ If the commission of work could be an act of charity in itself, elsewhere 'work' did not even feature in the narratives. Although Elizabeth Blackwell was found guilty of the theft of a silver table spoon and fork from a kitchen on Downing Street, her reason for being in the space in the first place appears plausible enough; she claimed 'I was a poor woman; I went down to ask for a bit of victuals, and I saw them laying at the kitchen door and took them up'.²⁹⁵ If there was no apparent connection between Blackwall and the kitchen on Downing Street, other examples suggest that the kitchen was a site of pity and relief for out-of-place servants. Certainly, a servant who was dismissed from the service of a milk man was fed and watered by his former mistress in the kitchen until he was able to earn his living again.²⁹⁶ A central site of monetary exchange, the kitchen also participated in an economy of obligation, and the 'moral economy' of the English house.²⁹⁷

²⁹³ See for example E. Haywood, *Present for a Servant Maid*, (London, 1743), p. 27-8; *Domestic Management*, p. 90.

²⁹⁴ *OBP*, May 1786, trial of John Williams, (t17860531-55).

²⁹⁵ *OBP*, January 1791, trial of Elizabeth Blackwell, (t17910112-21).

²⁹⁶ *OBP*, February 1786, trial of Joseph Richards, (t17860222-1). Also see *OBP*, Mary 1792, trial of William Bayley, (t17920329-30).

²⁹⁷ Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*; E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *P&P*, No. 50, (1971), pp. 76-136.

Kitchen Business

For servants, the kitchen was a place of business and work; those servants who appeared in the sample frequently located themselves in the kitchen space on those terms. Susannah Goodwin, a servant at the Leg Tavern in Fleet Street, for example, told the court that she was ‘about the kitchen doing n’business’.²⁹⁸ If we exclude the servants of chimney sweeps, hairdressers, and other labouring men who were ‘at work’ in the kitchen, it was predominantly female servants who associated this space with the ‘business of the house’. Although there are no examples of male servants ‘at work’ in the sample, we know from other records that they were present washing dishes and fetching pots in victualling houses, and cleaning silverware, taking inventories and dressing hair in kitchens further up the social scale.²⁹⁹ It is also clear from other sources that young ‘lads’ might be sent on errands or instructed to assist in the business of the house from the kitchen.³⁰⁰ The most frequently activity that female servants identified in the kitchen was that of washing. Indeed, in spite of the fact that female servants identified the kitchen as a space of ‘business’ and ‘work’, it was rare for them to specify any task other than washing. Mark Hailwood, researcher on the *Women’s Work in Rural England, 1500-1700* project, has recently suggested that the under-representation of domestic work in the records of the seventeenth-century Quarter Sessions was related to the extent to which particular tasks were time-intensive.³⁰¹ The predominance of washing in the sample was partly related to the requirements of the court (as we will see in chapter four), but also relates to the nature of the task. The wash was time-consuming and physically demanding in a way that other domestic tasks carried out in the kitchen probably were not; other kitchen activities might be completed simultaneously, and may have become subsumed within each other, hidden behind statements such as ‘I was in the kitchen’ or I was ‘about the kitchen doing n’business’.

²⁹⁸ *OBP*, October 1755, trial of Sarah Robertson, John Hunt, (t17551022-31). Also see *OBP*, February 1754, trial of Joseph Little, (t17540227-54); *OBP*, April 1780, trial of William Smith, (t17800405-42); *OBP*, January 1762, trial of Patrick O’Neal, (t17620114-8), this is not in the sample but is a good example.

²⁹⁹ For male servant fetching pots see pp. 229 For male servant cleaning silver forks in the kitchen see *OBP*, January 1781, trial of Elizabeth Blackwell, (t17910112-21). For a male servant taking an inventory of kitchen stuff see *OBP*, February 1790, trial of John Brown, (t17900224-11).

³⁰⁰ The Records and Recollections of James Jenkins, Respecting himself and others from 1761-1821, being a period of sixty years, vol. 1, MS vols. 196, Quaker Library.

³⁰¹ See <https://earlymodernwomenswork.wordpress.com/2016/06/09/how-domestic-was-womens-work/>.

The significance of the wash is also confirmed in the inventory sample. In larger households the distinction between kitchen and washhouse was significant, and suggests a desire to separate activities, where space allowed. Although this may well have been related to the ‘rationalization’ of domestic work, it also appears to have related to the difference between ‘wet’ and ‘dry’, and, perhaps, a concern about the acknowledged injury to health caused by damp conditions. That this was not simply about the desire to separate particular activities is indicated by the fact that in these larger houses the kitchen was not only a site of cooking, but also accommodated the ‘dry’ laundry. The inventory of William Blachford’s kitchen, for example, listed a board for ‘folding Cloaths’ an ‘ironing board 7ft 6 Long’ and a mahogany ‘voider’ used to store dirty clothes and linen.³⁰² The washhouse was where the copper was listed as ‘fixed with Iron work & wood cover’ along with ‘Five Washing Tubs’, ‘Two pails’ and ‘Four Cloaths Baskets’ as well as a ‘pr of Steps’ perhaps used for hanging wet washing on one of the ‘five cloaths posts & three props’ listed in the garden.³⁰³ This room also had ‘two deal tables’ and ‘forms’, perhaps used for sorting, folding and mending the washing, or perhaps where those involved in ‘the wash’ took their meals. That this was not simply about the specialisation of activities is suggested by the fact that the washhouse also appears to have been where dishes and utensils were washed and left to dry on the ‘plate rack’ listed in the same room. John Mitford’s kitchen too, accommodated a ‘press’ for napkins and a ‘voider’ for dirty linen, whilst his washhouse appears to have been used for cleaning the dishes too; ‘10 wooden trenchers’, ‘4 pye boards’, a ‘plate rack’ and ‘some Earthen pans, plates, Dishes Gallipots &c. & other odd things’ were also listed in that space.³⁰⁴ The presence of ironing boards and cloths, flat irons, and ‘cloaths’ horses in other inventories testifies to the various tasks of ‘finishing’ laundry that occurred in kitchens, even where separate ‘wash’ houses were present.³⁰⁵ The attempt to segregate wet and dry domestic labours through specialised rooms suggests that the difficulty of accommodating these activities in smaller kitchens. In households without a washhouse, laundry or ‘back’ kitchen, a temporal separation and the

³⁰² William George Blachford, 1793.

³⁰³ It is probably the difficulty of drying wet washing in busy kitchens that explains the prevalence of the upstairs ‘laundry’. For examples see William Snelling, 1740, Thomas Hill, 1747; Thomas Robinson, 1772, William Chenery, 1785.

³⁰⁴ John Mitford, 1740.

³⁰⁵ For examples see Nicholas Browning, 1800; George Perring, 1780; Benjamin Axford, 1756, Wilkinson Crumpton, 1760.

careful choreography of these tasks might have accomplished what was elsewhere done through building design. Washing tubs, clothes horses and the other washing paraphernalia were accommodated within the kitchen, but were also stored in cellars and yards until 'the wash' took over as the primary activity of the kitchen.³⁰⁶

If the inventory evidence helps enrich our understanding of the task of washing mentioned in the sample from the *Proceedings*, so too it can help us with other absences of information. There are very few references to food preparation, cooking, or childcare in the kitchen sample; activities which histories of housework have suggested took up much of the servants' time and were frequently practised within the space of the kitchen. The inventories confirm that cooking and the preparation of food was an important function of the kitchen. Recent work on cookery has done much to rescue domestic work from historical obscurity; in drawing attention to the skill, creativity and significance of the act of cookery, this scholarship has questioned simplistic assumptions about the functionalism and utility of the kitchen, although the space of the kitchen itself is rarely evoked.³⁰⁷ At the most basic level, the variety of kitchen utensils listed in the inventories hints at the labour and capabilities of those responsible for food preparation. The inventory of William Snelling's kitchen, for example, listed a fender, 'shovell', tongs, poker, and all the necessary cooking paraphernalia associated with the kitchen range.³⁰⁸ Joints of meat could be roasted on spits, and turned by the 'Wind up Jack'. Meat screens, hasteners, and dripping pans testify to the heat and mess produced by the cooking of meat, but also to the necessary re-cycling of animal fat.³⁰⁹ Knives, cleavers, beef and 'flesh' forks suggest the work that went into the preparation of meats and other foodstuffs, and the kettles, skillets, grid irons, sauce, stew and frying pans to the variety of cooking methods

³⁰⁶ For examples of washing tubs, washing stools, forms and pails in kitchen spaces see; Benjamin Tice, 1744, James Gooding, 1747, Richard Davies, 1778, Nicholas Browning, 1800, Gawler Gryffyth Rickman, 1800. For examples of washing tubs stored in 'back' kitchens, cellars and yards see William Crawford, 1741, Francis Gibson, 1746, James Waller, 1782 and Thomas Hill. 1747.

³⁰⁷ See for example, Davidson, *A Woman's Work*, p. 174; S. Sherman, 'The Whole Art and Mystery of Cooking: What Cookbooks Taught Readers in the Eighteenth Century', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, Vol. 28: Number 1, (2004), pp. 115- 135; S. Pennell, 'Perfecting Practice? Women, Manuscript Recipes and Knowledge in Early Modern England' in V. Burke and J. Gibson (eds), *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from the Trinity/Trent Colloquium*, (Farnham, 2004), pp. 237-258; S. Takats, 'Domestic Expertise: Literacy and Numeracy in the Eighteenth-Century Kitchen', *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History*, Vol. 32, (2004), pp. 46-64. On anxieties about the power of the kitchen, particularly of poison see F. Dolan, 'The Subordinate(s) Plot: Petty Treason and the Forms of Domestic Rebellion' in *Dangerous Familiars, Representations of Domestic Crime in England 1550-1700*, (London, 1994), pp. 59-88; Seleski, 'Domesticity is in the Streets', pp. 265-290.

³⁰⁸ William Snelling, 1740.

³⁰⁹ William Blachford, 1793.

employed in kitchens such as this. The presence of weights and clocks confirms the numeracy and time-management necessitated by such domestic work, and the frequency of ‘water plates’ suggest the demands of keeping food warm.³¹⁰

The responsibilities of child care appear much less obviously in the sample from the *Proceedings*, or in the inventories. It is not at all clear, for example, what we are to make of the ‘Childs Boat’ that appears in the kitchen of Stephen Dobbs’ house in St Dunstan in the West, and this survival is all the more puzzling as Dobbs’ inventory records him at a ‘Batchelor’ whose brother acted as his executor.³¹¹ Occasionally, these responsibilities appear incidentally in the *Proceedings*; as when the servant Ann Perry told the court she went into the kitchen ‘to give the child something to drink’.³¹² The presence of children in the kitchen is also suggested by the identification of a ‘boy’, a ‘little girl’ and a ‘child’ in the sample.³¹³ Aside from brief mentions such as this, the emotional as well as physical labour of childcare is not evident in the sample, although the very real anxieties and frustrations engendered by the simultaneous activities of childcare and other concerns of the kitchen has been demonstrated by Carolyn Steedman.³¹⁴ The kitchen was understood by female servants as a site of business and labour, and was a domestic space in which they would have watched over children, guarded pots simmering on the fire, prepared foodstuffs, ‘dressed’ dishes, and participated in the heavy labour of the wash although these activities are typically concealed in the records of the court.

The kitchen was a site of labour and it operated as a domestic nucleus around which servants orbited. The kitchen was the place in which servants’ tasks for the day were established and set in motion. It was common for the kitchen to be the first port-of-call in the morning, and act as a space where servants could prepare for the day ahead. Elizabeth Dalby, a cook in a lodging house run by a widow in Church Row in Hampstead, told the court she was ‘getting up when the clock struck four...it was dark; the first thing I did, I went into the kitchen, and stopped there the space of ten

³¹⁰ William Chenery, 1785, John Jackson 1786.

³¹¹ Stephen Dobbs, 1752.

³¹² *OBP*, December 1783, trial of Joseph Bishop, (t17831210-61).

³¹³ *OBP*, December 1782, trial of Richard Carey, (t17821204-18); *OBP*, April 1783, trial of Thomas Wilson, (t17830430-57); *OBP*, July 1783, trial of Sarah Jacobs, (t17830723-103).

³¹⁴ C. Steedman, ‘A Boiling Copper and Some Arsenic: Servants, Childcare, and Class Consciousness in Late Eighteenth-Century England’, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2007), esp. pp. 70-74.

minutes'.³¹⁵ Hannah Lyles, who was a servant in what appears to have been a larger house which also employed a coachman, suggested that she too made her way to the kitchen on waking, perhaps to light the fire, or begin the tasks for the day. She told the court 'I was up at a quarter after six... I went through the house into the kitchen'.³¹⁶ The contrast between the busy kitchens explored above, and the solitary servant alone in the kitchen reveals how significantly the time of day affected servants' experiences of particular domestic spaces. The manner in which that kitchen population might fluctuate is made clear by one witness's refusal to answer a question about how many people were in the kitchen 'because there is sometimes more, and sometimes less'.³¹⁷ If something of the daily routine and rhythm of domestic life is evidence in statements such as this, the kitchen also imposed its own rhythm on servants. The facilities of the kitchen meant this was a space to which servants gravitated throughout the day. Sarah Wright, who was a cook for Sarah and John Moffat recorded the perpetual to-ing and fro-ing between the kitchen and the rest of the domestic space. She told the court that:

I was in the hall...cleaning it...and I was at the bottom of the stairs, and he came in again in about twenty minutes afterwards, or not so much, the door was a jarr and he came in...while I was cleaning the hall, he asked several things about the family, he made a deal of wet about the door, and I left him, to go down into the kitchen to fetch a cloth to clean where his feet had wetted the hall.³¹⁸

The accounts of servant activity within the space of the kitchen reveal the transformative effect servants' labour could have within it. The proper ordering of the kitchen was something of a contemporary obsession, through which the kitchen (and those who worked in it) were embroiled in stereotypes of national significance.³¹⁹ The metropolitan kitchen featured frequently in the accounts of 'English' cleanliness: the Swiss travel writer César de Saussure for example, advised readers that well kept London houses were washed twice a week 'and that from top to bottom; and even every morning most kitchens, staircases and entrances are scrubbed. All furniture, *and especially kitchen utensils*, are kept with the greatest

³¹⁵ *OBP*, October 1783, trial of John Wallis, Richard Martin, Francis Warren, (t17831029-2).

³¹⁶ *OBP*, July 1786, trial of George Tucker, Henry Fosset, Thomas Taylor, (t17860719-85). Also see *OBP*, August 1786, trial of Robert Jones, (t17860830-1).

³¹⁷ *OBP*, January 1762, trial of Patrick O'Neal, (t17620114-8).

³¹⁸ *OBP*, February 1794, trial of Frederic Fehrenkemp, (t17940219-1).

³¹⁹ For example see Harvey, *The Little Republic*, pp. 182-187.

cleanliness' (my emphasis).³²⁰ In contemporary literature, English kitchens were referred to as 'neat', 'bright' and 'shining', as 'ordered' with all things in their 'proper' places.³²¹ Cleanliness, regularity and order were thought to define the English kitchen. These descriptions are particularly striking in comparison with English observations of 'foreign' kitchens, which were invariably described as 'sombre', 'dirty' and 'odiferous'.³²² The comparison with Scotland appears particularly marked; a London gentleman recorded his encounter with a Scottish kitchen in a letter to his friend in London;

...when he came to the Kitchen, he was not only disgusted at the Sight of it, but sick with the Smell, which was intolerable; he could not so much guess whether the Floor was Wood or Stone, it was covered over so deep with accumulated Grease and Dirt mingled together; The Drawers under the Table looked as if they were almost transparent with Grease; the Walls near the Servants Table, which had been white, were almost covered with Snuff spit against it; and Bones of Sheeps Heads lay scattered under the Dresser.³²³

It is the 'mingling' of categories, the 'matter out of place' that is problematic for the Englishman. If not kept in check, kitchen dirt concealed and transformed the properties of things; the floor became so covered in 'Grease and Dirt mingled together' that wood and stone became indistinguishable, the solid wooden drawers so caked in grease that they seemed transparent, and the walls near the servants' table metamorphosed from cleanly whitewash to a dark mass of snuff and spittle. The remark about the walls near the servants' table is particularly revealing for it is the only aspect of the description that occurred through wilful action – of spitting – rather than inaction. In this, the account mirrors Swift's satirical account of the destruction of servants who were advised to 'Write your own Name, and your Sweetheart's, with the Smoak of a Candle on the Roof of the Kitchen, or the Servant's Hall' and to 'stick your Candle...upon its own Grease on a Table'.³²⁴ If the imagery in Swift is comic, that in the letter from Scotland is more threatening; the author is 'disgusted by the sight of it' and 'sick with the Smell' of the kitchen – his response is one of bodily

³²⁰ C. Saussure, *A Foreign View of England in the Reigns of George I and George II, The Letters of Monsieur Cesar de Saussure to his Family, Translated and edited by Madame Van Muyden*, (London, 1902), p. 69.

³²¹ For 'neat', 'bright' and 'shining' see E. Ward, *The Wandring Spy: Or, the Merry Observer*, (London, 1729), p. 41.

³²² For an encounter with 'sombre and dirty' kitchen near Cologne see T. Cogan, *The Rhine: A Journey from Utretch to Francfort*, (London, 1793), p. 233.

³²³ *Letters from a gentleman in the north of Scotland to his friend in London; containing the description of a capital town in that northern country; ... In two volumes*, (London, 1759), p. 172.

³²⁴ Swift, *Directions*, p. 15, p. 8.

aversion and purge rather than the snigger of the ironic. These accounts reveal how important 'dirt' became as a cultural identifier in the eighteenth century, and the potential the kitchen held to 'pollute' and 'contaminate' the rest of the household.³²⁵

The sample also suggests the ways in which the work of the kitchen might impact the rest of the domestic space. Much of the kitchen business was hard and physical labour that temporarily restricted access to this space by other members of the household, and also generated noise and mess that carried throughout the house. The domestic disorder engendered by the wash is well known, but the records suggest that the cleaning of the kitchen was similarly disruptive. In September 1785, for example Ann Dell recorded how her own efforts at scouring the kitchen dictated the movement of two visitors throughout the domestic space. Although Hannah Chadwick, the mistress of the house recorded only that two gentlemen visitors were invited into the parlour, Dell was clearer about her own role in dictating domestic traffic; she recalled that although the men were asked first into the parlour this was because the kitchen was being cleaned, and that 'when the kitchen was scowered, these two gentlemen went in'.³²⁶ The butler Kenneth M'Clough similarly recalled the disruption caused by the cleaning of the kitchen by Elizabeth Price the cook and Ann Simpson the housekeeper in the house of one William Wills in 1783. M'Clough stated 'the women were washing the kitchen, and with their pattens on the stone floor they made such a noise that any body might come in and not be heard'.³²⁷ If the English kitchen was characterised as a uniformly cleanly and orderly place, the *Proceedings* make clear not only that dirt and disorder were ever-present in it, but that it was the women of the house who were primarily responsible for managing this mess, and that it was servants who bore the brunt of this labour.

High Life Below Stairs?

If the kitchen was a premier site of servants' labour, it could also act as a site of gathering and sociability, particularly in large households in which a number of domestics were employed. The cook Ann Watson described such a kitchen gathering

³²⁵ M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, 1966, (London, 1995).

³²⁶ *OBP*, September 1785, trial of James Lewis, (t17850914-23).

³²⁷ *OBP*, December 1783, trial of Thomas Martin, (t17831210-45).

in the kitchen of an eighteenth-century development on Clifford Street to the court; Watson explained that Thomas Whittocks had been in service in the house and had been invited back by the rest of the servants to drink tea for the evening. All of the servants of the house assembled in the kitchen along with their visitor and another man who had come to visit the coachman. These frequent inter-household kitchen visits were concluded by Mary Blake, a housemaid in another house, to be a 'common thing among servants'.³²⁸ Who it was that was welcomed into the house depended on the household. Past servants appear to have been assured of a hearty welcome, and male servants appear to have frequently hopped-between households to visit friends and acquaintances. This kitchen sociability was not limited to acquaintances gained through service. The kitchen in the house of one Henry Appleton served as a meeting-point for a variety of individuals. It was not only that Robert Wallis, who had lived in the family for two years, 'invited himself to drink tea' one Tuesday evening in 1792 and brought along his wife and a 'woman friend', but the servants in the house also had a variety of visitors. James Edington, the father of the housemaid Mary Edington, had come to the house to take down some bed curtains, but told the court that they had 'some dinner below about five' and that he remained in the kitchen whilst his daughter went about her business.³²⁹

If the kitchen in these larger London households resembled the function of a servants' hall as an auxiliary living space for servants, something of this kitchen sociability is also recorded further down the social scale. Ann Lawson, who was a servant in a chandler's shop in Walter Lane in Fleet Street, was also visited by a friend whilst she was in place. Her mistress told the court 'there was no other person in the kitchen from half past six til nine. Ann Lawson was our servant; Sarah Hirst came to see her; she came in at half past 6, and staid to drink tea with my servant; she was there till after seven o clock'.³³⁰ If these kitchen gatherings sometimes relied on the absence of masters and mistresses (perhaps at houses in the 'country', perhaps visiting friends and acquaintances elsewhere in the city), there is no suggestion that this was because these gatherings were understood as anything other than a routine

³²⁸ OBP, September 1799, trial of Robert Classon, Thomas Whittocks, (t17990911-16).

³²⁹ OBP, September 1792, trial of Robert Wallis, Thomas Kirk (t17920912-12).

³³⁰ OBP, July 1771, trial of Ann Lawson, Sarah Hirst, (t17710703-55).

function of this space.³³¹ Although the servants' gathering on Clifford Street took place after the mistress and one of her daughters had quitted the house for the evening, another daughter was left at home, apparently in the care of the servants. Moreover, it is not the case that their domestic duties were abandoned for these kitchen gatherings. Although the servants in Clifford street were at tea in the kitchen, the lady's maid Ann Bayne told the court that she was 'very often up stairs, and was often in the kitchen; I saw my lady to-bed about nine in the evening, she was indisposed; I went down into the kitchen immediately after...I want up stairs to my lady again, and stopped with her a few minutes'.³³²



Fig. 2. Robert Laurie, (after John Collet), *The Jealous Maids*, (London, 1772), mezzotint, BM.

The kitchen acted as site of the establishment of new acquaintances as well as the maintenance of old ones. John Collet's *The Jealous Maids* depicts the kitchen as an

³³¹ For negotiations over access to the kitchen see *OBP*, April 1790, trial of James Phealan, Thomas Mullins, (17900424-94); *OBP*, September 1788, trial of Barton Dorrington, (t17880910-46).

³³² *OBP*, September 1799, trial of Robert Classon, Thomas Whittocks, (t17990911-16). For other examples of the business of the house operating alongside these kitchen gatherings see *OBP*, April 1790, trial of James Phealan, Thomas Mullins, (17900424-94); *OBP*, September 1792, trial of Robert Wallis, Thomas Kirk, (t17920912-12).

important location of interaction between male and female servants, and this is an impression that is very much confirmed by the *Proceedings* (fig. 2). Ann Coke, the cook in a large house in Westbourne Green, for example, told the court that the footman Robert Classon gifted her a smelling bottle (which he was later accused of stealing) in the kitchen of her master's house. Coke's description reveals the type of simultaneity of kitchen practices suggested by the gathering in Clifford Street and by *The Jealous Maids*. Coke told the court that:

Robert Classon gave me a smelling-bottle...When he gave it me, Mary Blake was sitting by me; Robert said he would make me a present of it; I was shelling peas, and I took no notice of it; Mary Blake took it up, and said, it was a very nice present. Miss Doyle afterwards said she should be very glad to have it, to have one made like it, and I delivered it up to her.³³³

In smaller households without male servants or their visitors, the presence of workmen in this space meant that this was a site where young female domestics might meet prospective husbands. Although Ann Hunt, the servant of an attorney and his wife who lived near Charlotte Street, was brutally murdered by the porter who came calling for her, the preceding kitchen-courtship does not appear unusual. John Hogan, porter for a cabinet maker, brought chairs from his master to the house where Hunt was employed. Mr Garrow, who had attended on the girl as she lay dying in Middlesex Hospital, recorded how the relationship developed. He stated:

...it appears from the conversation of the deceased, that the prisoner asked her for something to drink, for some water or small beer, this was the first conversation he had with her, she then good naturedly gave him some, he thanked her, and told her he would bring her a ribbon, he accordingly brought her one, and he apologised that it was not quite so good as he wished, but that on some other day he would bring her a better; this caused a degree of intimacy, and in short it appears, that upon every Sunday from that time, to the time of the poor woman's death, this man constantly watched an opportunity of visiting this unfortunate servant in the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Orrell.³³⁴

Although Mary Skelton, who was a servant in a house on Fludyer Street near St. James's Park was already married by the time John Watson came calling, it is possible that courtship was also his intention when he turned up on the doorstep. She recalled 'I had not seen the prisoner a great many years, and he came to see me on the Thursday before New Year's Day... it was about one, or a little after, I asked him

³³³ *OBP*, September 1788, trial of Robert Classon, Thomas Whittocks, (t17990911-16).

³³⁴ *OBP*, January 1786, trial of John Hogan, (t17860111-1).



Fig. 3. Richard Newton, *Black Eyed Lovers*, (London, 1795), etching, BM.

into the kitchen'.³³⁵ The account given by the servant Eleanor Masters of her reason for admitting an admirer into the kitchen confirms that courtship was frequently the

³³⁵ *OBP*, January 1785, trial of John Watson, (t17850112-17).

reason for kitchen gatherings. Masters recalled that she met Barton Dorrington (who she later accused of raping her in the kitchen of her master's house on Fenchurch Street) whilst she was on an errand for her master, that he 'pretended courtship...came to the door, and said he had something particular to say to me; I went to the door, and asked him up stairs; there was none of our family at home... We went into the kitchen, that is up one pair of stairs'.³³⁶ Kitchen courtships, scarcely mentioned in the historiography, ran parallel with the much more frequently documented romantic practices at the front door and in the parlour. If the kitchen romances portrayed in eighteenth-century visual and literary representations appear lewd, illicit, and hyper-sexualised, the sexual violence revealed here appears as an aberration in a more legitimate maturation process; the kitchen, in these accounts, is not (or not only) the site of insubordination and the 'world turned upside down', but played an important role in the establishment of legitimate unions, and the reproduction of the conjugal household as the basis of society. The role the kitchen played in servants' courtship locates this space not only within a narrative of the 'work' of the employer, but within the life histories of those servants who worked within it. A site of grinding toil it may have been, but it was also, and simultaneously, a space for the consideration of the future.

That the kitchen was also a site of the negotiation and breakage of these bonds is also suggested in the *Proceedings* and in contemporary prints. Richard Newton's *Black Eyed Lovers* (1795) depicts the kitchen as a site of conflict and discord between servant lovers (fig. 3). Certainly there is evidence that the kitchen might become a hotbed of pent-up aggression towards female servants by their partners, notably by seamen whose wives were employed in service during their absence. When John Gray was deployed to the West Indies, his wife Ann was employed as a servant in the house in which the couple had lodged. Although on his return Gray lodged in a house nearby, he appears to have been a frequent fixture in the kitchen, particularly at mealtimes. Michael Murray, the master of the house, reported that the two were 'at breakfast together (I suppose) in the kitchen about ten o'clock in the morning'. David Ryon, another servant in the house, told the court that on the same morning, Ann Gray 'came down and made a fire, and set on the tea-kettle, he [John Gray] came and

³³⁶ *OBP*, September 1788, trial of Barton Dorrington, (t17880910-46). For an example of a servant maid marrying a porter see *OBP*, May 1786, trial of Henry Bland, (t17860531).

sat down near her; they had some grumbling words...I heard her say, she desired none of his talk, and desired he would let her alone'. Sadly, Murray was not able to persuade her spouse to 'let her alone', and he killed her with the knife on which she was toasting bread by the kitchen fire.³³⁷ If the reason for the breakdown of the relationship between John and Ann Gray appears only obliquely in the record, that between Andrew Hallgeel and his wife who was employed as a housekeeper at the house of the school-master William Cartwright in Bromley is clearer, and centres on the cuckolding (real or imagined) of Hallgeel by his wife and her master. Again, the dramatic events unfold in the kitchen. Elizabeth Golding, one of Cartwright's other servants, reported for the court that Hallgeel 'frequently dined and breakfasted' in the house and even 'lay with his wife every night'. Six days before Hallgeel was accused of murdering Cartwright and violently assaulting his wife in the kitchen of the house at Bromley, he and a friend had visited the Black Swan alehouse in Bow where the landlady had told him 'go home to Cartwright's whore, you cuckold'. Whether or not a relationship between his wife and her master had been struck up in his absence at sea is unclear, but the master did not survive the allegation. After murdering her master, Hallgeel chased his wife into the kitchen and plunged the blade of the hanger into her thigh.³³⁸ Murders, assaults, quarrels and squabbles are clearly not restricted only to the space of the kitchen; the geography of verbal and physical violence is far-reaching, but as recent work has revealed, not only suggests important assumptions about the historical norms of behaviour regulation, it also highlights key locations of conflict. The ferocity of the frustrations and jealousies expressed in the kitchen suggest that it played an important part in the negotiation of relationships between servants and their spouses.³³⁹

Conclusions

The connection of servants to the kitchen is longstanding; it is the space in which they are represented in contemporary visual images and literary representations, and in modern-day heritage performances and accounts of life 'below stairs'. The kitchen

³³⁷ *OBP*, July 1749, trial of John Gray (t17490705-30).

³³⁸ *OBP*, July 1767, trial of Andrew Hallgeel, (t17670715-24).

³³⁹ See M. Hunt, 'Wife Beating, Domesticity and Women's Independence in Eighteenth-Century London', *G&H*, Vol. 4: 1, (1992), pp. 10-33. E. Foyster, *Marital Violence: An English Family History, 1660-1857*, (Cambridge, 2005); J. Bailey, "'I dye [sic] by Inches": Locating Wife Beating in the Concept of a Privatisation of Marriage and Violence in Eighteenth-Century England', *Social History*, Vol. 31, No. 3, (2006), 273-294.

was clearly an important site for servants; as a domestic arena in which they spent much of their time, and in which their presence was expected, it has been a fruitful space with which to begin our investigation of servants' relationship to the domestic space. This chapter has confirmed that even when servants were located in kitchens, their lives were not conducted solely 'below stairs'. The variety of kitchen-spaces in eighteenth-century London has revealed the complex manner in which domestic life was informed by the structure and function of the household as a whole; there were a multiplicity of ways in which the space of the kitchen interacted with the rest of the house and its inhabitant, and this was predominantly a function of the trade of the house, and its layout. Commonly understood as a 'backstage' zone, this chapter has brought the kitchen to the fore. Rather than a site of segregation and marginalisation, this chapter has suggested that the kitchen is best understood as a 'contact zone' between household members and between the house and the wider world. If the kitchens of public and victualling houses, and of shopkeepers, were frequented by customers and various members of the household, they were not purely 'public' or accessible spaces. The illicit behaviour hidden in kitchens, and the sexual violence perpetrated within them, suggests that they might be concealed from the everyday mechanisms of community and household surveillance- at least at certain points in the day. The kitchen was a space in which social identities and expectations were learned, performed, and negotiated. It was precisely because of the expectations and demands of this space that it was a site in which domestic frustrations could boil over, and physical, sexual or verbal violence interrupt the routine function of this space. Although not a uniquely feminine space, the kitchen was an important site of female labour. Male householders in larger households were not heavily involved in the tasks of the kitchen, and had relatively little need to enter the kitchen stairs save to 'check all was safe' at the end of the day, to wind up the kitchen clock, or to search in the depths of the house for their recalcitrant servants. In smaller households, male householders were a more familiar presence; either sitting around the kitchen hearth, eating their meals, or watching-over the shop. Female householders also presided over the kitchen from a distance that increased relative to their social status and individual inclination; although there is no evidence from the sample of the kind of absence evident in the male sample, wealthy middling women took part in more task-orientated and time-limited kitchen activities than their servants. Mistresses might venture into the kitchen to search for their servants, send

them on errands from it, or instruct them how best to serve the bread and butter. Although little evidence of the distribution of 'work' survives in the records, the inventories suggest the kitchen was a site in which domestic competences and anxieties were learned and worked through, and in which servants' place in the household and domestic economy was enacted. Although in smaller households, the kitchen remained an important location of informal or familial socialisation, the servants' place in the household was marked out through their labour and obedience to domestic demands. If it is the parlour that has been constructed as the centre of the domestic leisure, and the shop or study as the location of domestic work, this chapter suggests the kitchen was an alternative domestic nucleus – at least for the servants of the house.

Chapter Two: The Garret

In William Godwin's essay 'Of Servants', the servants' 'apartments' were explored as a device through which to critique the master-servant relationship and the co-habitation of extreme wealth and poverty engendered by it. For Godwin, the rooms in which servants slept demonstrated the injustice of eighteenth-century society. Godwin's descent 'below stairs' was described thus:

I descend by a narrow stair case. I creep cautiously along dark passages. I pass from room to room, but every where is gloom. The light of day never fully enters the apartment. The breath of heaven cannot freely play among them. There is something in the very air that feels musty and stagnant to my sense...If I enter the apartment which every servant considers his own, or, it may be, compelled to share with another, I perceive a general air of slovenliness and negligence that amply represents to me the depression and humiliated state of the mind of its tenant. I escape from this place, as I would escape from the spectacle of a jail.³⁴⁰

The 'stagnant' 'gloom' of the servants' apartments contrasted markedly with the 'spacious, lofty and magnificent' floors explored by Godwin upstairs.³⁴¹ If social difference was inscribed by the built environment, it was also betrayed by the manner of inhabitation; the 'slovenliness' and 'negligence' with which the rooms were kept by their servant occupants suggested to Godwin the 'depression and humiliated state of the mind of its tenant'. Godwin's argument that houses were 'inhabited by two classes of being...two sets of man drawn from two distinct stages of barbarism and refinement', was, of course, related to his political philosophy; Godwin was concerned with the service relationship as a stand-in for broader relations and inequalities between men.³⁴² As with the kitchen encounters which opened the previous chapter, Godwin's account might be understood as an attempt to 'fix' the meanings of these spaces; or at least to construct the experience of service from his own perspective. If the accommodation within the house of another appeared 'abhorrent' to Godwin's 'sense', his observations were as much about his own domestic expectations, and his understanding that a life in service excluded men from the self-determination and independence deemed the cornerstone of 'rational', 'progressive' eighteenth-century masculinity.

³⁴⁰ W. Godwin, 'Of Servants', *The Enquirer, Reflections on Education, Manners and Literature, In a Series of Essays by William Godwin*, (Dublin, 1797), p. 208.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 205, p. 209.

This chapter explores the function and meaning of the spaces allocated to servants' sleep as a way of thinking-through their experience of the space in which they lived and laboured. If the kitchen offered evidence of servants' 'work' within the house, and introduced some of the complex social relations that went along with it, the garret offers a different viewpoint. The bed was an important part of the agreement between masters and/or mistresses and their servants. It was part of a material arrangement that complicated an understanding of live-in service simply as 'work'. Although the monetary wages and tips, perquisites and vails offered to servants have been analysed extensively, and recognised to play a key role in the 'modernisation' of the service relationship, the beds and chambers in which servants slept have received little scholarly attention.³⁴³

Although scholars have demonstrated the fluidity and flexibility of servant sleep in the seventeenth century, the accommodation of servants in separate chambers in the eighteenth has been remarkably under-studied. Since Lawrence Stone's controversial assertion that it was the 'privacy' of the master and mistress of the house that removed servants from multi-occupancy rooms to rooms in the garret, scholarly work has been more concerned with upsetting the chronology and motivation of Stone's thesis rather than reflecting on the significance of change.³⁴⁴ The first part of this chapter synthesises the work on sleeping arrangements in the early modern and eighteenth-century household. It considers the various motivations for separate sleeping arrangements, and suggests that sleep was organised around more complex social axes than the privacy of the master and mistress. The second part of the chapter focuses not on *why* servants might have been separated in sleep, but on the meanings of the spaces in which they were accommodated. Despite recent research which has demonstrated the role domestic material culture played in meaning-making and identity formation, we know next to nothing about the ways in which these rooms functioned or were furnished. This section is based on the sample of inventories outlined in the introduction. Six inventories from the sample referred to a servants' room of some sort, a further six from the earlier period of 1700-1740

³⁴³ For wages and vails see footnote 95.

³⁴⁴ Lawrence Stone famously argued the chamber offered the opportunity for the master and mistress to 'escape the prying eyes and ears of the ubiquitous domestic servants' and identified the late eighteenth century as the period when 'a growing desire for privacy led to the removal of all servant bedrooms to a separate attic floor', Stone, *Road to Divorce*, p. 212, 119. Also see Stone, *Family Sex and Marriage*, pp. 254-55.

identified a room or rooms as belonging to a servant; these twelve inventories have been combined together to form what I refer to here as the ‘servant sample’. A broader sample of 42 garret ‘bedchambers’ from 1740-1800 was taken to increase the understanding of rooms such as this; these rooms are referred to as the ‘garret’ sample.³⁴⁵ The last part of the chapter explores the meanings of these spaces through an examination of two late-eighteenth-century representations of the maid’s bedchamber. In contrast to the variety of representations which depicted servants in the kitchen, images of servant bedchambers were extremely rare in the eighteenth century, and, when examined in conjunction with evidence from the *Proceedings* and the inventory evidence, reveal an intense contemporary anxiety about the space of the bedchamber, an anxiety which not only made such representations difficult, but which hints at a more acute problem of accommodating servants within the eighteenth-century domestic space.

It is not the case that the accommodation of servants has been entirely neglected. In 1956 J.J Hecht briefly sketched-out the ways in which eighteenth-century servants were ‘housed’ in elite households. Hecht suggested that ‘on the whole, domestics were well housed’, but concluded that these spaces were a ‘matter of indifference to servants at the time’.³⁴⁶ Christopher Gilbert’s 1977 catalogue for an exhibition on ‘back-stairs furniture’ at country house properties also addressed the material constitution of servants’ bedchambers.³⁴⁷ Although Gilbert’s interest in ‘back-stairs’ furniture offered a radical departure at a time when furniture historians were concerned only in developments of style and the connoisseurial tradition exhibited in the more genteel areas of the house, the focus on extant material from country house properties left many details of these spaces unexplored, particularly for the smaller metropolitan households in which the majority of servants were employed.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ ‘Bedchambers’ have been defined as those rooms equipped with a bedstead, bed, and some other bedding, see below, p. 117. See appendix 3b and 3c.

³⁴⁶ Hecht, *Domestic Servant Class*, pp. 102-109, quotation, p. 109.

³⁴⁷ Gilbert, *An Exhibition of Back-Stairs Furniture*, n.p.

³⁴⁸ For exceptions see D. Hussey and M. Ponsonby, *The Single Homemaker and Material Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century*, (Farnham, 2012) esp. pp. 149 – 200; Hamlett, *Material Relations*, pp. 51-54.

‘A room for my servant’

Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was a significant shift in the space allocated for servants to sleep. Servants, who might have bedded-down in kitchens or on trundle or truckle beds at the bottom of their master and mistress’ bed in the early part of the seventeenth century were increasingly removed from these rooms and accommodated elsewhere in the house – usually in the garret.³⁴⁹ The re-arrangement of domestic sleeping arrangements has been acknowledged to register a change in the relationship between servants and their masters and/or mistresses. Like many of the changes to the domestic space in this period, it is the desire for privacy on the part of the master and mistress that is thought to have informed the architectural transformation which brought separate bedchambers into being. The removal of servants’ beds from rooms they shared with their masters and/or mistresses is understood as part of the ‘privatisation of sleep’.³⁵⁰ Intimately connected to the bodily functions of sleep, sex, birth and death, the bed and its related activities are thought to have been concealed as the ‘civilising process’ advanced.³⁵¹ Importantly, it is only masters and mistresses who are thought to have benefitted from this spatial development. The closing-off of activities of the marital bed is thought to have been achieved through the relocation of chambers upstairs, and by shutting the door against other members of the household, particularly against servants.

If the history of the conjugal bedchamber is bound up with narratives of privacy, the sleeping spaces allocated to servants are typically defined by its lack. Laura Gowing suggested that in the seventeenth century some servants ‘slept in the kitchen; others had no fixed room. Many slept in trundle beds below or at the end of their masters and mistress’ beds, or with children. Wherever they were, they had little guarantee of safety or privacy’.³⁵² Amanda Flather too suggested that ‘The lower status of servants....was indicated by the variety of less comfortable, less exclusive circumstances in which they were expected to sleep. They were less likely to be

³⁴⁹ Flather, *Gender and Space*, pp. 72-73; Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, pp. 79-80.

³⁵⁰ Crook, ‘Norms, Forms and Beds’, p. 17.

³⁵¹ N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners*, 1976, (Oxford, 1982).

³⁵² Gowing, *Common Bodies*, p. 60.

allocated a space for sleeping'.³⁵³ She also argued that 'family members could constantly and casually pass through the rooms in which servants slept and employers entered whenever they wished'.³⁵⁴ If the sleeping arrangement of early modern servants have been characterised as flexible, non-exclusive and lacking in privacy, there has been little attempt to think seriously about the ways this might have changed in the eighteenth century and what this can tell us about servants' experiences and expectation of the household in which they served. Despite a recognition of the dramatic transformation of the domestic environment (particularly in London), these arrangements are assumed to endure throughout the period. Indeed, for Samantha K. Williams, it was the case that even in the nineteenth century

[s]ervants quarters could be small attic rooms or even just spaces on landings or virtual cupboards without windows or doors. Wherever their quarters were, something that was common to all of them was that they could rarely be locked, since servants had to be accessible at all times.³⁵⁵

Building on recent work which has questioned the monolithic accounts of domestic change as a response of the increasing desire for the 'privacy' of the individual or conjugal couple, this section suggests that sleeping space was negotiated along various social axes, and according to a variety of material, moral and practical considerations.

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that the development of separate bedchambers did not simply take place as part of a desire for 'privacy' on the part of the master and/or mistress, but as part of a series of developments based on understandings of appropriate nocturnal interaction according to age, gender, status, and circumstance.³⁵⁶ Laura Gowing, Amanda Flather and Tim Meldrum have demonstrated that it was the separation of genders that first dominated negotiations around the sleeping arrangements of servants, and that this was as much about maintaining the reputation of the household and guaranteeing the sexual honour of those within it as it was about protecting the 'privacy' of the master and/or

³⁵³ Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 69.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48. Also see Richardson, *Household Servants*, pp. 97-98.

³⁵⁵ S. K. Williams, "'I was forced to Leave my Place to Hide my Shame': The Living Arrangements of Unmarried Mothers in London in the Early Nineteenth Century" in J. McEwen and P. Sharpe, *Accommodating Poverty: The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor, c. 1600-1850*, (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 195.

³⁵⁶ John, 'At Home with the London Middling Sort'. Also see Gowing, *Common Bodies*, p. 67.

mistress.³⁵⁷ The most obvious indication of this was the desire to separate male and female servants from each other. Laura Gowing's analysis of the Bridewell records from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has suggested that householders were admonished by the Church for accommodating their male and female servants in the same space which, as she suggested, indicates that it was 'both suspect, and not unimaginable'.³⁵⁸ By the eighteenth century, it appears to have been rare for male and female servants or apprentices to be accommodated in the same space. In the course of the research for this chapter, I found no evidence that male and female servants were expected to sleep in the same bed or even in the same room. It was not the case, as Lawrence Stone suggested, that 'the segregation by sex of the servants' sleeping quarters ...only developed in the Victorian period'.³⁵⁹ The threat of impropriety and sexual misconduct was also central in the separation of female servants from male members of the household and male servants from female members. In the context of the early modern obsession with the cuckolded man, it is not surprising that it was male servants who were first expelled from the marital chamber and given a room of their own. Aside from one 'boy' sleeping in his master's bedchamber, Flather found no references to male servants sleeping with their masters or mistresses in the seventeenth century records examined by her.³⁶⁰ Although there are suggestions in other sources that male servants might be expected to share a room with bachelor masters, particularly when travelling or visiting other households, by the end of the eighteenth century it appears that this too was an undesirable arrangement; although James Boswell was provided with a 'little press bed in Dr. Johnson's room' during his *Tour of the Hebrides* in 1773 he 'had it wheeled out into the dining room' before going to sleep.³⁶¹

If, in the seventeenth century, maid servants shared rooms with their masters and mistresses, by the eighteenth century, the sexually aggressive male replaced his wife in the popular imagination, and a master sharing a bed or room with a female servant acquired sexual connotations.³⁶² Although mistresses shared beds with their female

³⁵⁷ Gowing, 'Twinkling' pp. 275- 304; Gowing, *Common Bodies*, p. 60; Flather, *Gender and Space*, pp. 72-73; Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, pp. 79-80.

³⁵⁸ Gowing, 'Twinkling', p. 292.

³⁵⁹ Stone, *Broken Lives*, p. 220.

³⁶⁰ Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 72.

³⁶¹ C. Edwards, 'Press Bedsteads', *Furniture History*, Vol. 26, (1990), pp. 42-43.

³⁶² Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. pp. 71-72. For the classic statement on changing gender roles in the eighteenth century and their relationship to sexuality see T. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender*

servants until the end of the century, the master's presence in the rooms of female servants appears to have become, as Gowing has suggested, 'evidence of immorality itself'.³⁶³ The removal of female servants from the bedchambers of their masters suggests a new emphasis on the female servant as sexually appealing and available. Whether the flowering of literature and satire on this subject indicated an increase in the actuality of master-servant relations, or a new disapproval voiced through new media is difficult to say. What is clear is that by the eighteenth century, the proximity of sleeping arrangements was assumed to be dangerous not only to the reputation of the maidservant, but the master too. Something of the immorality suggested by the proximity to the maid's bed is recorded in the *Proceedings*. Ann Atkinson was clear of the sexual misconduct implied when she entered the kitchen of her house and found her son sitting on her maid's bed in 1732. 'You Dog', she chastised, 'what business have you upon the Maid's Bed?'³⁶⁴ Although, in the crowded metropolis, it was not always possible to distance the master from the maid in sleep, contemporary accounts suggest this provoked acute anxiety. The London bookseller James Lackington recalled the confession of an old man in his memoir that 'having let too much of his house to lodgers' he was '*obliged* to put the maid's bed in the room where he and his wife slept' (my emphasis).³⁶⁵ The negative implications of this proximity were made clear as the story progressed. The man told Lackington that: 'one morning he had seen the maid lying asleep, nearly or quite uncovered, and he ...assured us, that ever since that time the devil had been every day tempting him to do that which was nought'.

The proximity of the maid servant's body 'quite uncovered' proved tempting for masters throughout the period. The anxieties that masters would 'bed' their maids was a commonplace of eighteenth-century culture, and the fraught relations particularly (but not exclusively) between single masters and their female servants is suggested in the popularity of eighteenth-century texts which focused on such a

From the Greeks to Freud, (London, 1990). For a discussion of this literature see K. Harvey, 'The Century of Sex? Gender, Bodies and Sexuality in the Long Eighteenth Century', *THJ*, Vol. 31, Issue 1, (2002), pp. 207-238.

³⁶³ Gowing, 'Twinking', p. 289.

³⁶⁴ *OBP*, February 1732, trial of Robert Atkinson (t17320223-41).

³⁶⁵ J. Lackington, *The Memoirs of the Forty-Five First Years of the Life of James Lackington, Written by Himself. In Forty Seven Letters to a Friend*, (London, 1793), p. 119.

relationship.³⁶⁶ Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* was the most successful of the genre, and the infamous scenes in Pamela's bedchamber became the subject of a number of prints and paintings, which are explored in more detail later on. Hovering between sexually-available subordinate subject to the wishes of the master, and dependent member of the 'household family' over whom they had a duty of protection, the female servant and her bedchamber became contested terrain. The dilemma of this relationship – and between the two models of masculinity suggested by it – was expressed with clarity in the diary of the bachelor painter Benjamin Robert Haydon. In 1817 Haydon wrote:

The bed creaked. She was in and near me! Was it manly to let a nice girl sleep so near one and at least without making an attempt? I could hardly breathe! Was it manly, I thought, to take advantage of the helpless girl, whose father had expressed great comfort in having his favourite daughter under my care!³⁶⁷

If the temptation of the old man recorded by Lackington were caused by the sight of the maid undressed in her bed, Haydon's lusting was provoked merely by the creaking of her bed. Although, on this occasion, the masculine agreement made with the maid's father triumphed over Haydon's 'manly' impulse to make an 'attempt', the real sexual danger engendered by proximity in sleeping arrangements is made clear in accounts such as this. Clearly, distance – particularly between the master's bed and the maid's – was central to domestic decency, and not simply because of the privacy of the householder.³⁶⁸

Bedfellows

In order to understand the meaning of the spaces allocated for servants to sleep, we first need to identify them. If sleeping arrangements have traditionally been understood to be determined by the desire for 'privacy' of the conjugal couple, they have also been recognised as a potent demonstration of the domestic hierarchy.

³⁶⁶ Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 101. For advice to servant maids about living with bachelors see Haywood, *Present for Servant Maid*, pp. 45- 46.

³⁶⁷ Cited in Hussey and Ponsonby, *Single Homemaker*, p. 163.

³⁶⁸ For an example of shopmen sleeping in the parlour next to the shop see *OBP*, December 1786, trial of Samuel Phipps (t17861213-19). For apprentices and a 'lad' sleeping in the shop see *OBP*, September 1755, trial of Samuel Dipple, (t17550910-34). For an example of a mistress laying with her maid see *OBP*, October 1781, trial of Jane Faulkner, (t17811017-42) and Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 80.

Amanda Flather, as we have seen, argued that '[t]he lower status of servants... was indicated by the variety of less comfortable, less exclusive circumstances in which they were expected to sleep'.³⁶⁹ Dan Cruickshank too suggested the impromptu and contingent nature of servants' sleep, and argued that servants 'were parcelled around the house in a most ad hoc manner to suit the convenience of the family'.³⁷⁰

The inventory evidence suggests that the accommodation of servants in multifunctional rooms was not as common as has been assumed, at least not in the households which were recorded in the sample. There were, for example, only four examples from the sample where a bedstead was listed in the kitchen. The first was in the house of John Crich, which, as was suggested in the introduction, appears to have been the result of the movement of 'stuff' occasioned by a house sale and not a reflection of more normal domestic practice.³⁷¹ More routine arrangements appear to have been documented in the kitchen of Stephen Dobbs' house, which was outfitted with a 'table' and a 'press' bedstead in 1752, in the kitchen of William Armroid's house which was furnished with a 'wainscot press bedstead' in 1773, and in the inventory of Thomas Hill's kitchen in his house in Greenwich, which listed a 'table bedstead' in 1747.³⁷² Armroid and Dobbs' houses were some of the smallest in the sample, a fact which suggests this arrangement was probably the result of severe spatial restriction – at least in the City.³⁷³

What has been referred to as 'flexible' or 'ad hoc' sleeping arrangements were more complex than they first seem. These arrangements were not designed simply to demonstrate the subordinate position of servants within the household, but were closely related to their role within the house. Although rare by the end of the century, a bed occupied by a maid in the kitchen clearly demonstrated her 'place' within it and, perhaps, her responsibility over it. A more common arrangement was for temporary bedsteads to be located in spaces associated with the business of the house and its stock. The inventories of the baker Benjamin Tice, the gilder George Woodrove, and the saddler James Gooding all listed bedsteads and beds in their

³⁶⁹ Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 69.

³⁷⁰ Cruickshank and Burton, *Life in the Georgian City*, p. 58.

³⁷¹ John Crich, 1741. See p. 42.

³⁷² Stephen Dobbs, 1752; William Armroid, 1773; Thomas Hill, 1747.

³⁷³ According to Peter Earle's method of counting rooms, Hill's house in Greenwich had ten rooms; Dobbs' and Armroid's had three. For more information see appendix 1.

shops, as did the inventory of William Hiccocks' 'compting house'.³⁷⁴ The location of these beds suggests the duty of the servant to protect the household and its stock. When Charles Simpson, a servant in Chamber Street, was asked why he lay in a room in an external warehouse and not in the house, he replied explicitly that he lay there '[t]o take care and see that nothing of this kind [a robbery] happens'.³⁷⁵ It may well be this type of arrangement which is suggested in the inventory of John Jackson's 'Shop and Warehouse' on Oxford Street in which a 'Turn Up Bedstead Feather Bed Bolster 3 Blankets' was listed in the parlour between a shop and warehouse external to the dwelling place.³⁷⁶ A similar arrangement, this time within the place of residence, was suggested in Frances Gibson's 'Back Garret' which was inventoried in 1746. The inventory lists not only a 'Sacking bedstead feather Bed fflock Bolster one feather pillow' and 'two Sheets', but a variety of other valuable items including 'three work Benches', 'a Drawing Broad a Deal Chest Sticking Tools fourteen Plains twelve Chissells and Goudges... a Pair of Compasses' and a 'water Trough and Whet stone'.³⁷⁷ Sleepers played an important role in the security of the house, and sleeping arrangements need to be understood in the context of the increasingly complex material worlds of the domestic space, and the desire to protect it over night. Although this multi-functionalism must have affected the way these spaces were conceived, and the way access was managed, more research would need to be done in order to understand the precise ways in which these spaces functioned and were understood. When spaces were furnished with space-saving 'press', 'table' or 'turnup' bedsteads, these multifunctional items suggest how domestic spaces transformed over night.³⁷⁸ We cannot assume, therefore, that simply because these rooms were used by a variety of household members during the day that they were inherently accessible at night. A variety of temporal and behavioural practices operated to demarcate space used for sleeping from other functions. It is telling that one master, who suspected his servant maid of stealing from him, did not simply barge into the kitchen where her bed was located, but told the court that he 'ordered my servant to knock at the kitchen door, and tell the prisoner we wanted some plates

³⁷⁴ Benjamin Tice, 1744; George Woodrove, 1745, PROB 3/45/34, NA, GM transcript; James Gooding, 1747; William Hiccocks, 1749.

³⁷⁵ *OBP*, May 1760, trial of George Anderson (t17600521-4).

³⁷⁶ John Jackson, 1786.

³⁷⁷ Frances Gibson, 1746.

³⁷⁸ See appendix 3a.

out of the kitchen'.³⁷⁹ The material constitution of the house offers an insight into the location of servants' sleep, and suggests an alternative explanation for the development of separate sleeping spaces. As Flather suggested, the [c]omfort, convenience and the status associated with the ownership of several expensive beds probably...contributed to change'.³⁸⁰ Spacious sleeping arrangements and well-equipped material environs demonstrated the solvency and status of the householder, and suggested the nocturnal decorum of those in 'place' within.

Perhaps the most common assumption about the sleeping spaces allocated to servants is that maidservants were required to share a bed with the children of the house.³⁸¹ By the end of the eighteenth century, however, there was a clear desire to distance servants from children in slumber. 'Nurseries' or rooms that were identified as being occupied by the children of the house were present in the inventories throughout the sample and, even where space was more limited, the inventory evidence suggests it was desirable to accommodate servants in a separate bed if not in a separate room.³⁸² It might have been this arrangement that was adopted in the house of the watchmaker Wilkinson Crumpton in 1764 where a 'trump box bedstead' was listed in the garret alongside a 'small childs bedstead'.³⁸³ Similarly, the fore garret in Jonathan Jekyll's house listed 'a bedstead with blew furniture' as well as a 'cradle'.³⁸⁴ Although we cannot know who was accommodated in these beds, or even whether they were occupied at all, the sleeping practices revealed in the *Proceedings* reiterate the desire to distance servants and children in sleep. It appears to have been more common or for the children of the house to share a bed than for servants to bed down with them. Edward Reynolds, a shoemaker who lived on Broad Street, for example, told the court that Elen Mitchell, his maid servant, slept 'not on the same bed, but in the same room' as his five children in 1794.³⁸⁵ If, in the Reynolds household, the conjugal couple were separated from the children and the servants, in single-parent

³⁷⁹ *OBP*, April 1751, trial of Mary Dunslow, (t17510417-23).

³⁸⁰ Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 72.

³⁸¹ On this practice in early modern England see Gowing, *Common Bodies*, p. 69 -70

³⁸² On the significance of nurseries in the nineteenth century see Hamlett, *Material Relations*, pp. 111-143. See appendix 3a.

³⁸³ Wilkinson Crumpton, 1760.

³⁸⁴ John Jackson, 1786; Jonathan Jekyll, 1746, PROB 3/46/1, NA, GM transcript; Wilkinson Crumpton, 1764. On the desirability of accommodating young children in separate cradles, see K. Calvert, *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900*, (New Hampshire, 1996), pp. 27-29; pp. 65-67.

³⁸⁵ *OBP*, February 1794, trial of Aby Tory, (t17940219-48).

households it seems have been more likely for the children of the house to have slept with their parent than with the servants. The widow Eleanor Errington, for example, shared a bed with her child, whilst her maid and a waiter were provided with their own rooms elsewhere in the house.³⁸⁶ Similarly, although Hannah Bailey appears to have been responsible for the majority of child care in the house, she did not share her bed with the children; Bailey told the court that when her master returned to the house she took the youngest child (aged about three) from the bed in which it lay ‘with the rest of the children’ to bed with him, and explained to the court that ‘it was always ailing, it will never lay with any body since his mother died, but its father, it lays with Mr. Jones every night’.³⁸⁷ If these examples suggest that age was a key determinant of sleeping arrangements, they also illustrate that the practicalities of daily life might disrupt ‘normal’ sleeping arrangements. One witness, for example, explained that her husband slept in a room with the couple’s four-year-old daughter, aged, that their son, who was nine, slept across the hallway and shared a room (if not a bed) with a male lodger, and that she slept in a room on the floor above because she had a ‘little child about fourteen months old, that was cutting his teeth, and to prevent disturbing my husband, as he worked so hard, I lay with a woman’.³⁸⁸ Although hugely significant in marking out social relationships, sleeping arrangements were related to a variety of more practical concerns. Domestic hospitality, illness, nocturnal anxiety, material discomfort, and familial fallings-out were just some of the many other reasons that domestic sleeping arrangements might alter in the short term.³⁸⁹ Although servants were clearly expected to sleep where they were bid, and might be moved around the house for a variety of reasons, these were not necessarily ‘ad hoc’ and did not simply register the subordination of the servant.

If the *Proceedings* and the inventory evidence reveal a variety of domestic sleeping arrangements, and something of the motivations behind them, understanding exactly *why* particular arrangements were accepted above others is more difficult, and suggests important contemporary understandings not only about sleep, but also about

³⁸⁶ *OBP*, April 1778, trial of William Turner, Joseph David, Henry Jordan (t17780429-42). Also see *OBP*, October 1776, trial of John Harding (t17761016-24).

³⁸⁷ *OBP*, December 1784, trial of Robert Jones (t17841208-182).

³⁸⁸ *OBP* February 1786, trial of Joseph Rickards, (t17860222-1). For other examples of the complex sleeping arrangements revealed at court see *OBP*, April 1775, trial of Thomas Tunks John Hines, (t17750426-57) and *OBP*, September 1776, trial of James Grant, (t17760911-23).

³⁸⁹ *OBP*, June 1785, trial of George Olive, (t17850629-2); *OBP*, July 1832, trial of Jonathan Smithies, (t18320705-4). On illness see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 88; M. Pelling, ‘Apprenticeship, Health and Social Cohesion in Early Modern London’, *HWJ*, Issue 37, (1994), pp. 33-56.

the ways in which social identity and the body were understood. The early modern period witnessed an explosion of texts and treatises that blamed bedsharing for the spread of disease; Thomas Tryon, the author of several advice books for householders written at the end of the seventeenth century, believed ‘stinking’ beds to be ‘the most injurious to the Health and Preservation of Mankind’.³⁹⁰ The anxiety about the spread of disease appears particularly helpful for understanding the distancing of servants and children, who were known to be more susceptible to illness.³⁹¹ For older children, it was a moral rather than physiological contagion that was feared. That children might be led astray by servants who exposed children to ‘low maxims, and coarse and vulgar modes of thinking’ was a common complaint of eighteenth-century literature.³⁹² Interestingly, material considerations also appear to have been important in determining sleeping arrangements. This was not simply about conforming to matters of material decorum, but was also related to the fear that servants would ‘dirty’ the beds in which they slept and that the ‘stink’ of a servant might become embedded in the space in which they slept. This was partly related to an understanding of the servants’ bodies as less controlled and more ‘leaky’ than those of their masters and mistresses. Margaret Pelling found that wetting the bed was a common complaint made by masters and mistresses of their male apprentices, but it may also have been a common trait in servants too.³⁹³ If this fact aligns servants with the children of the house (bedwetting was known as ‘the children’s disease’), other evidence suggests that servants’ bodies (and the beds in which they slept) were beginning to be associated with the rank corporeality of the labouring poor. Interestingly, the ‘exterminator’ John Southall, for example, advised householders that ‘If you have occasion to change Servants, let their Boxes, Trunks, &c. Be well examin’d before carried into your Rooms, lest their coming from infected Houses

³⁹⁰ T. Tryon, *A Treatise of Cleanliness in Meats and Drinks*, (London, 1682), p. 5-7. Cited in Cockayne, *Hubbub*, p. 58.

³⁹¹ H. Newton, *The Sick Child in Early Modern England, 1580-1720*, (Oxford, 2012).

³⁹² On the anxiety about the relationship between children and servants see Godwin, ‘Of Servants’, p. 201-3, quotation, p. 201. Also see Trumbach, *Egalitarian Family*, pp. 129-131. On this practice in the early modern period see Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 70

³⁹³ Pelling, ‘Apprenticeship, Health and Social Cohesion’, p. 49; L. Smith, ‘The Body Embarrassed? Rethinking the Leaky Male Body in Eighteenth-Century England and France’, *G&H*, Vol. 23, Issue 1, (2013), pp. 46-46. For female apprentice wetting the bed see *OBP*, September 1767, trial of James Brownrigg, Elizabeth his wife James Brownrigg John their son (t17670909-1).

should prove dangerous to yours'.³⁹⁴ One master explained that his apprentice lay on the floor and not on a bed because the 'the boy was lousy' and Lisa Sarasohn's exploration of bedbugs in early modern England reveals the extensive damage caused by servants trying to rid the household of the bugs they had carried in.³⁹⁵ In 1760, for example, a maid accidentally set fire to her master's house whilst trying to burn the bugs from out of her bed, and another servant accidentally killed a porter whom she served with a 'liquid that was bought the day before, in order to destroy bugs'.³⁹⁶ The development of separate sleeping chambers was not only related to the desire for 'privacy' on the part of the master and/or mistress, but was related to a whole host of developments including contemporary understandings of the needs of (and anxieties about) particular bodies, the material environment of the household, and the desire for domestic order and decency.

If the sharing of a bed with a servant might be a dangerous possibility for the children of the house, it was more common between servants. Without information about the numbers of servants employed in the households from which the inventories were taken, it is impossible to say for certain whether the servants employed in them were expected to share beds. Most garret rooms in the sample were provided with only one bedstead whereas households in the servant sample (which, as we shall see, was composed of larger households) were more likely to be outfitted with multiple bedsteads.³⁹⁷ Whilst acknowledging that the small sample size makes comparison problematic, it can be suggested that larger households were not only more likely to employ larger numbers of servants, but to have inhabited houses better able to accommodate multiple bedsteads than those in the garret sample. It can also be suggested that larger households were more likely to employ male domestics, who were more likely to have been accommodated in a bed of their own. It is not only that this arrangement is suggested by the architect Isaac Ware's advice that a bedstead be 'contrived for one man, or two maid servants', but that the rooms of male servants in the sample were generally outfitted with more bedsteads than their

³⁹⁴ J. Southall, *A Treatise of Buggs: Shewing When and How They Were First Brought to England*, (London, 1730), pp. 34.

³⁹⁵ *OBP*, February 1776, trial of Stephen Self (t17760221-38). For a master beating an apprentice because he was 'lousy' see *OBP*, January 1733, trial of John Bennett, (t17330112-3). Also see servant complaining about being made 'lousy' through sharing a bed, *OBP*, September 1789, trial of Edward Studsbury, (t17890909-96).

³⁹⁶ L.T. Sarasohn, 'That Nauseous Venemous Insect' Bedbugs in Early Modern England, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 4, (2013), p. 518.

³⁹⁷ See appendix 3b and 3c.

female counterparts. It is also probably no coincidence that it was only the rooms of male servants which listed three bedsteads.³⁹⁸ Although this may well have been the preferred arrangement, in the crowded households of the metropolis, it was clearly not always possible. The *Proceedings* reveal that bed sharing was not unheard of among male servants, apprentices and labourers; the seven apprentices of the jeweller John Berkenhead, for example, lodged in four beds in the garret of his house near Cheapside in 1789.³⁹⁹ The provision of bedspace within this room marked out the hierarchy among apprentices; it was only Jack Spencer, the most experienced apprentice, who slept in a bed on his own, the remaining six apprentices appear to have shared the other three beds.⁴⁰⁰ Gender was a key determinant in decisions about bedsharing, a fact which illustrates not only how differently the male and female body were understood in this period, but further challenges assumptions about the essential desirability of privacy as a non-gendered human desire.

The *Proceedings* reveals the frequency with which female servants shared beds even in the most genteel establishments. Susannah Pendry who served in the house of a Lady who lived in Arlington Street in fashionable Piccadilly, for example, referred to her fellow servant Elizabeth Wood as her ‘bedfellow’ in 1766, and, further down the social scale, the maidservant Mary Mead who lived at the Red Lion near Lincoln’s Inn Fields also shared her bed with the young ‘girl’ employed in the household to draw beer and collect pots.⁴⁰¹ Although bed sharing is often conflated with necessity, the low-status of sleepers suggested by assumptions about the desirability of sleeping alone, it was a far more complex practice than this suggests, and was not always the product of a lack of space. If the act of sleeping alone has been understood as a ‘triumph’ of privacy, it might also have been experienced as isolation and loneliness.⁴⁰² Whether a bedfellow was desirable depended on circumstance; too many bodies in a bed and sleep became difficult. The everyday annoyances of a

³⁹⁸ By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the apprentice George Haywood complained when ‘2 of us slept in a room just large enough to hold a bed [and we] had to put our boxes under it’, and recorded that at his next place he had the ‘advantage of generally sleeping alone’, Barker and Hamlett, ‘Living above the Shop’, p. 311, p. 322.

³⁹⁹ *OBP*, January 1770, trial of John Lister, Isaac Pemberton, Sarah Hill, (t17700117-37). Also see *OBP*, September 1790, trial of Martha Jones, (t17900915-51); *OBP*, April 1791, trial of John Hanson, (t17910413-25).

⁴⁰⁰ *OBP*, September 1789, trial of William Clark (t17890909-31).

⁴⁰¹ *OBP*, July 1766, trial of Elizabeth Wood (t17660702-36); *OBP*, December 1770, trial of Charles Earle, (t17701205-39). Also see *OBP*, January 1770, trial of John Lister, Isaac Pemberton, Sarah Hill, (t17700117-37).

⁴⁰² Gowing, *Common Bodies*, p. 66.

disrupted night's sleep are hinted at in the *Proceedings* which record how Samuel Lovelace, restless in bed and worried about a noise that appeared to come from below stairs was 'nipped' by his bedfellow and 'fell asleep again'.⁴⁰³ Bedsharing demanded a physical proximity that may have been more or less desirable depending on your bedfellow (and their 'dirt'). One servant maid revealed the bodily intimacy that might go along with sharing a bed or a room. She told the court that 'in the night I heard her out at the feet of the bed at the chamber-pot... and I heard her come into bed some time after that'.⁴⁰⁴ There were also positive attributes to bedsharing; bodies helped generate warmth in cold garret rooms, and collective sleeping might have been the chosen arrangement in winter, even when other beds were available.⁴⁰⁵ It is well known that for young women, bedsharing was an important mechanism of nocturnal safety and a guarantee of sexual fidelity; the proximity of others, particularly those who shared your room or bed, was a key component in guarding the security of the body made vulnerable by sleep. The security offered by bedfellows is evident in the way that mistresses and maids huddled together in bed against violent and abusive masters, and in the expectation that a maid might share her mistress's bed should her husband be absent from the house.⁴⁰⁶ If bedsharing assured the security and sexual probity of your bedfellow, it might also offer a companionate intimacy that was not limited only to the marital chamber.⁴⁰⁷ Sharing a bed with a mistress might offer the opportunity to advance a particular domestic grievance, request a character, or acquire knowledge of the comings and goings of the household. A mistress sharing a bed with her maid might also suggest trust, and be understood as an 'honour' for that individual.⁴⁰⁸ Sharing a bed with a fellow servant probably offered a similar variety of experiences and scenarios. Rather than experienced simply as a product of their subordination and their place within the domestic hierarchy, bedsharing might be understood by servants as an opportunity

⁴⁰³ *OBP*, February 1786, trial of Joseph Rickards, (t17860222-1).

⁴⁰⁴ *OBP*, July 1766, trial of Elizabeth Wood (t17660702-36). See discussion on the practices of 'protean' privacy, p. 27-29.

⁴⁰⁵ The seasonal aspect of this nocturnal practice is suggested by Pamela's question to the housekeeper: 'am I to have two Bedfellows again, these warm Nights', S. Richardson, *Pamela: Or, Virtue Rewarded*, 1746, (London, 2015), p. 193.

⁴⁰⁶ It is not clear when this practice died out. For an example of a footman sleeping in an adjacent chamber to save his mistress from abuse see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 88. On sharing a bed for security see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 108; Gowing, 'Twinkling' p. 295; Gowing, *Common Bodies*, p. 33.

⁴⁰⁷ Gowing, 'Twinkling', p. 280, p. 296, p. 297, p. 298. Also see Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, p. 172

⁴⁰⁸ See Gowing, *Common Bodies*, p. 66.

for company, intimacy and friendship; the bed and bedchamber might offer connection as much as the personal reflection and the solitary and inward-looking subjectivity generally expected of it.

'My room where I lie'

Although the inventories and *Proceedings* reveal that apprentices, male servants and shopmen might lodge in beds in warehouses and shops, and that female servants might be expected to sleep in 'turn up beds' in kitchens, they also suggest that these arrangements were not necessarily typical.⁴⁰⁹ Although the number of inventories which identified a 'servants' room were small, this was certainly an underestimation of the rooms that were used as such.⁴¹⁰ It is well known that appraisers were most careful in delineating room usage in households with large numbers of rooms, for '[w]hen the number of goods in the households was small, or the house had very few rooms, there was less need for the appraisers to differentiate in this way'.⁴¹¹ The 'servant' sample certainly reflected the largest households in the sample. 'Servants' rooms were identified in the inventories of two mercers, a weaver, an embroiderer, a soap maker, a vintner, a slater and a baker. Although they appear to have been employed in solidly middling trades, these men were at the affluent end of the middling spectrum. Following Earle's method of calculating the number of rooms per house, and acknowledging that inventories can only offer a vague estimate of house size, the households that identified a 'servants room' were found to have between seven and sixteen rooms.⁴¹² The average number of rooms for the servant sample was eleven, much higher than Earle's average for 'middling' houses from the period 1665-1720 of 7.2 and the average from the inventory sample from 1740-1800 of 7.1. The location of the rooms in the servant sample confirmed that these chambers were generally to be found at the top of the house and in the garret, and a broader sample of garret rooms was therefore taken of the inventories from 1740-1800 to increase the understanding of these spaces.⁴¹³ Although these garret rooms were not identified with an adjective that confirmed that a servant lodged within, it

⁴⁰⁹ Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 209-210. Also see Priestly and Corfield, 'Rooms and Room Use', p.107, p. 115-177.

⁴¹⁰ Overton et al, *Production and Consumption*, p. 80.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121-122, quotation, p. 122.

⁴¹² Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 211, p. 375 (footnote 16).

⁴¹³ For discussion of methodological challenges of inventories see introduction pp. 41-43.

seems sensible to assume that many of these spaces were inhabited by servants or apprentices, although they might also have been occupied by the children of the household, visitors, or less well-off lodgers. Because this chapter focuses on the space in which the servant slept, rooms were included only if the inventory listed a bedstead and bed and some type of bedding. This larger sample of garret rooms adds a further 42 rooms in 28 inventories to the 24 rooms in twelve inventories in the ‘servant’ sample.⁴¹⁴ I refer to these rooms as the ‘garret’ sample.

The outfitting of servants’ bedchambers conformed to standards of material decorum which, as Amanda Vickery has noted, helped to ‘maintain social distinctions [and] prevent...social confusion’.⁴¹⁵ The clustering of servants’ rooms at the top of the house reflected the low status of these spaces. Unsurprisingly, on all occasions where the value of goods is listed in the sample, the furniture in servants’ rooms was worth much less than the other bedchambers in the house. Although the value of servants’ furniture depended on the wealth of the householder, each room was rarely valued at more than one per cent of the total value of the inventoried goods, and never more than two per cent.⁴¹⁶ The low value of the goods is partly due to the relative sparseness of these spaces. It is hardly surprising that servants’ rooms were not kitted-out with the writing desks and telescopes, corner cupboards and show-cabinets present in bedchambers elsewhere. The low value was also related to the types of goods found on garret floors. The garret was something of a domestic dumping ground; window sashes and lathes, drums and ‘odd things’, coach seats, baskets of waste paper, ‘old stuff and lumber’ and ‘sundry bundleages’ were just some of the seemingly miscellaneous items that servants would have had to negotiate.⁴¹⁷ It was not only miscellaneous items that worked their way into garret rooms from elsewhere in the house, but more functional items of furniture too. The frequency of the adjective ‘old’ to describe goods recorded in garret rooms suggests these spaces were outfitted either with goods requisitioned from downstairs, purchased on the second hand market, or that had been in place in the garret for a very long time indeed (figs

⁴¹⁴ See appendix 3c.

⁴¹⁵ Cruickshank and Burton, *Life in the Georgian City*, pp. 51-60. A. Vickery, ‘Fashioning Difference in Georgian England’, in Findlen, *Early Modern Things*, p. 343.

⁴¹⁶ See appendix 3b and 3c.

⁴¹⁷ James Blatch, 1800; Thomas Shackleton, 1749, PROB 3/49/1, NA, GM transcript; John Jackson, 1786. From servant sample see William Durrant, 1709, CLA/002/02/01/2885, LMA, GM transcript; Caleb Booth, 1714, CLA/002/02/01/2982, LMA, GM transcript. For similar see Hussey and Ponsonby, *Single Homemaker*, p. 94-95.

4 and 5).⁴¹⁸ The inventory of John Mitford's garret in his house in Bow, for example, listed 'two old quilts', 'two old blankets' and 'two old chairs'.⁴¹⁹ 'Old' was also used throughout the sample to describe beds, bedsteads, and bed furniture, chairs, tables, chests of drawers, and curtains, rugs, prints and looking glasses amongst other things.⁴²⁰ The contemporary connotations of the word are not always obvious; 'old' might have been used to describe old-fashioned or outmoded domestic objects; it is noticeable, for example, that mahogany tables, chairs and dressing tables began to appear in garret rooms only in the final quarter of the eighteenth century, long after the heyday for mahogany furniture in the 1720s and 30s.⁴²¹ It is also likely that furniture made its journey upstairs after accident had befallen it, or as substantial wear made it inappropriate for use elsewhere in the house. It is therefore unsurprising that as well as 'old', 'broke' and 'broken' appeared relatively frequently to describe goods in garret bedchambers.⁴²² If, as recent work has suggested, the disposal of objects can be understood as constitutive of social action and the ways individuals rid themselves of goods as integral to the performance of social relations, the subordinate position of servants was registered in their putting-up with domestic debris.⁴²³ The ties of dependence that linked a servant to their master or mistress might also be suggested through this furniture, although a broader study would be needed to assess exactly which pieces were being given to them, and whether this related to goods that might also be gifted or bequeathed from masters and mistresses.

⁴¹⁸ Also see J. Northcote, *Diligence and Dissipation: Or the Progress of a Modest Girl and a Wanton Exemplified in Ten Different Stages of their Lives*, (London, 1796), p. 11.

⁴¹⁹ John Mitford, 1740.

⁴²⁰ For old beds, bedsteads and bed furniture see John Mitford, 1740, William Crawford, 1740-1; Francis Gibson, 1745-6; George Woodrove, 1746, Jonathan Jekyll, 1746, Thomas Shackleton, 1749, Stephen Dobbs, 1752-3, Benjamin Axford, 1756; Wilkinson Crumpton, 1764. For old tables, chairs and chests of drawers see Luke Hepworth, 1740; John Mitford, 1740, Jonathan Jekyll, 1746, John Brice, 1749; Thomas Shackleton, 1749, William Chenery, 1785. For old textiles and decorative items see William Crawford, 1741, George Woodrove, 1746, Thomas Hill, 1747. Benjamin Axford, 1756.

⁴²¹ For examples of mahogany goods see Thomas Robinson, 1772, John Jackson, 1786; Gawler Gryffyth Rickman, 1800; James Blatch, 1800. On the difficulty of identifying language in inventories see Trinder, 'The Wooden Horse, in *When Death Do Us Part*, p. 270.

⁴²² See Wilkinson Crumpton, 1764; Thomas Shackleton, 1749.

⁴²³ This is a growing area of scholarly research. See for example, A. Fennetaux, A. Junqua and S. Vasset (eds), *The Afterlife of Used Things: Recycling in the Long Eighteenth Century*, (New York and London, 2015), and S. Werret, 'The Power of Lasting: Managing Material Loss in Early Modern Science' and A. Stielau, 'I Flowed with the Flames: Metallic Losses and Gains in the Fiery Furnace' both presented at the Understanding Material Loss conference at the University of Birmingham in February 2017, see <<https://understandingmaterialloss2017.wordpress.com>> last accessed 23rd April 2017.

But how, exactly, were these spaces furnished? The bed was the main focus of these rooms; bedsteads, ‘half-headed’ bedsteads, ‘horse’ and ‘stump’ bedsteads were listed in the inventories. The frequent expansion and contraction of the household is also indicated by the presence of temporary bedsteads, or bedsteads in storage in garret rooms and in closets.⁴²⁴ Although servants may have borne the brunt of what Sasha Handley has termed ‘slumberferous overcrowding’ of eighteenth-century households buroe, box, and table bedsteads were also occupied by genteel overnight guests, and should not be understood as a simple reflection of subordination status.⁴²⁵ The majority of beds in servants’ rooms were fitted-out with a feather ‘bed’ (or mattress). This was a considerable expense, and offered a warmer and more comfortable night’s rest than cheaper flock or pallet beds on offer at workhouses and the cheapest lodging houses.⁴²⁶ Feather bolsters, pillows, blankets, quilts, coverlids and rugs were also provided in the overwhelming majority of servants’ rooms and garret rooms. Curtains for the bed also appear common, and provided extra warmth and protection in potentially draughty garret rooms. The closing of bed curtains might also have created a subdivided, enclosed space within a larger room, and hint at the small-scale practices of privacy discussed in the introduction.⁴²⁷ Although the presence of tables, chairs, and some fire furniture suggests these spaces had other functions aside from sleep, the lack of separate cooking equipment and eating utensils distinguishes these spaces from lodging rooms, and registers the expectation that their inhabitants would also have recourse to the wider resources of the domestic space.⁴²⁸ It is not the case, however, that masters and mistresses provided their servants only with the barest of essentials, and the fact that these spaces were not sites of utter material deprivation is suggested by the frequency that prints, pictures and other decorative items are to be found in the inventories. The inventory of the ‘mans garrett’ in Richard Knight’s house, for example, included ‘two prints’, and that of the ‘maids’ room of Nicholas Browning’s house listed ‘four colour prints framed and glased’ and ‘four other prints

⁴²⁴ For examples see appendix 3a.

⁴²⁵ S. Handley, ‘Sociable Sleeping in Early Modern England, 1660-1760, *History*, (2013), pp. 79-104.

⁴²⁶ For flock and straw beds in the workhouse see Harley, ‘Material Lives of the Poor’, p. 86. For flock beds in lodgings houses see Styles, ‘Lodging at the Old Bailey’, p. 71. For examples in garret sample see Jonathan Jekyll, 1746, Thomas Hill 1746-7, William Hiccocks, 1748, John Brice, 1749, Benjamin Axford, 1756.

⁴²⁷ See pp. 27-29.

⁴²⁸ On lodging see Styles ‘Lodging at the Old Bailey’; J. McEwan, ‘The Lodging Exchange: Space, Authority and Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century London’ in McEwan and Sharpe, *Accommodating Poverty*, pp. 50-68.

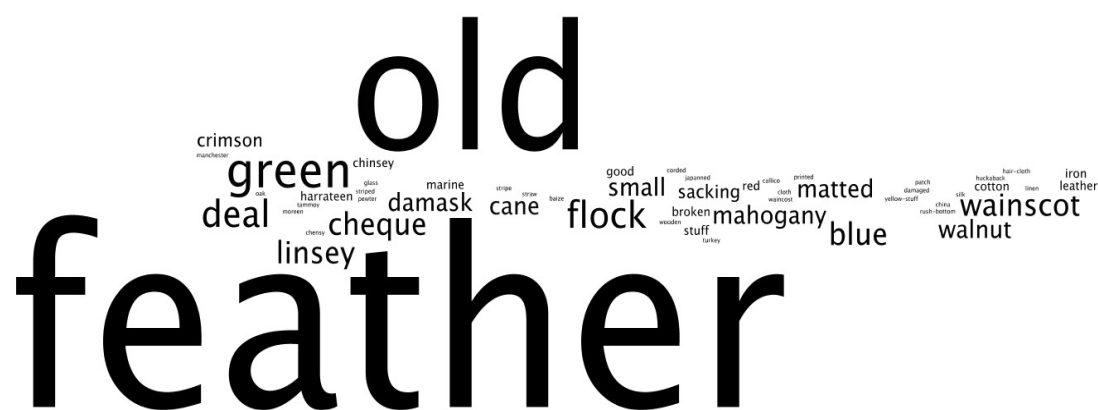


Fig. 4. Wordcloud representing adjectives describing goods in garret from inventories, 1740-1800.
The larger the word appears the more frequently it appeared in the sample.

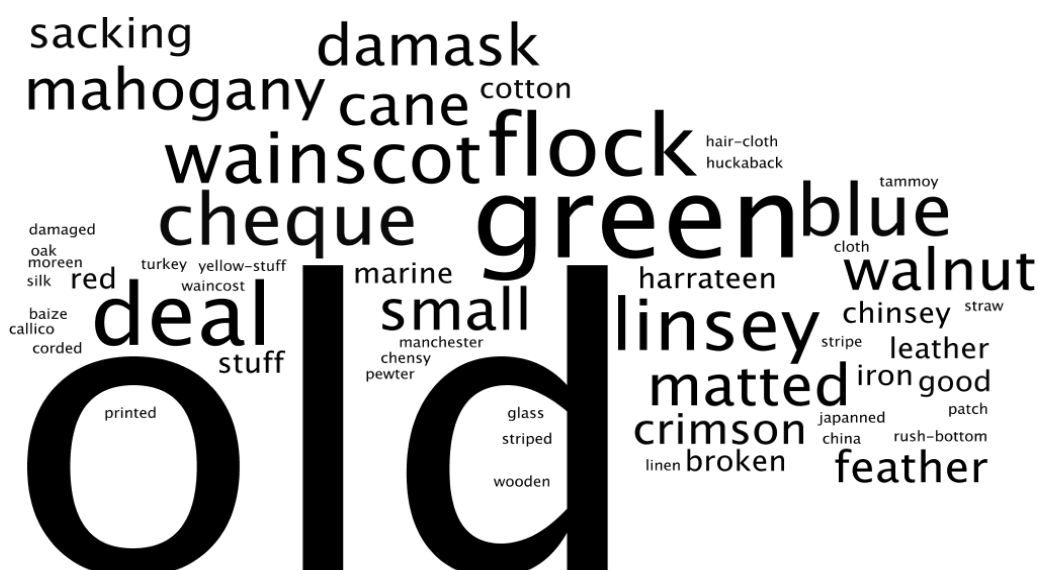


Fig. 5. Wordcloud representing adjectives describing goods in garrets from inventories 1740-1800
without the word 'feather'.

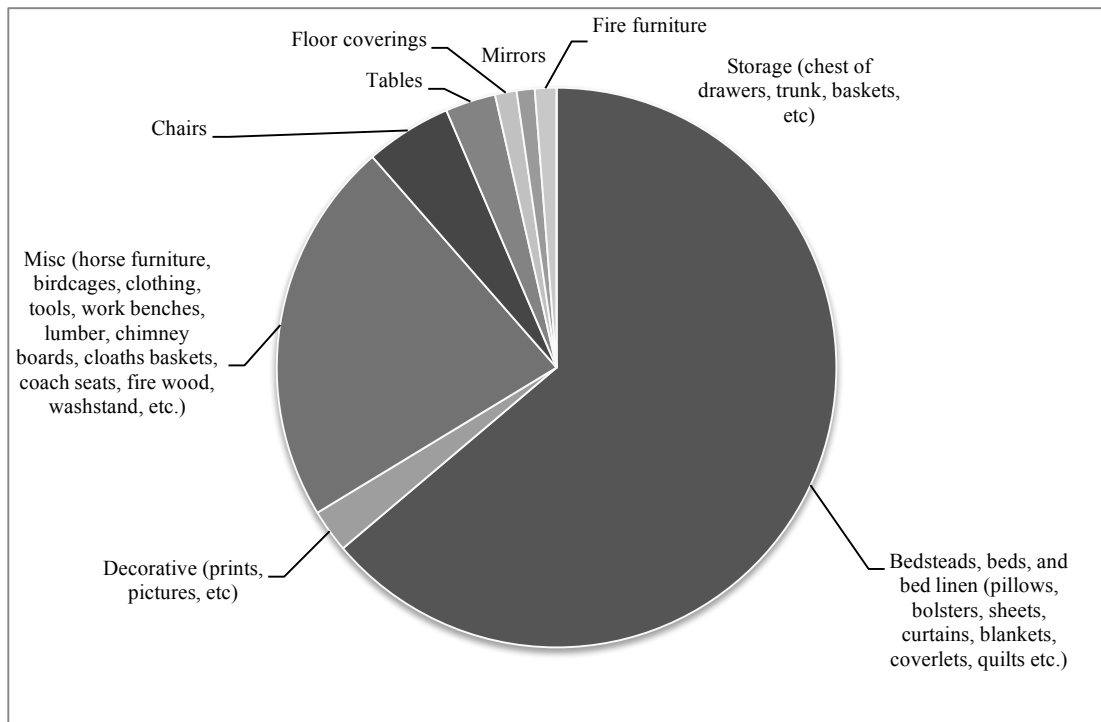


Fig 6: Chart to show contents of garret inventory sample, 1740-1800

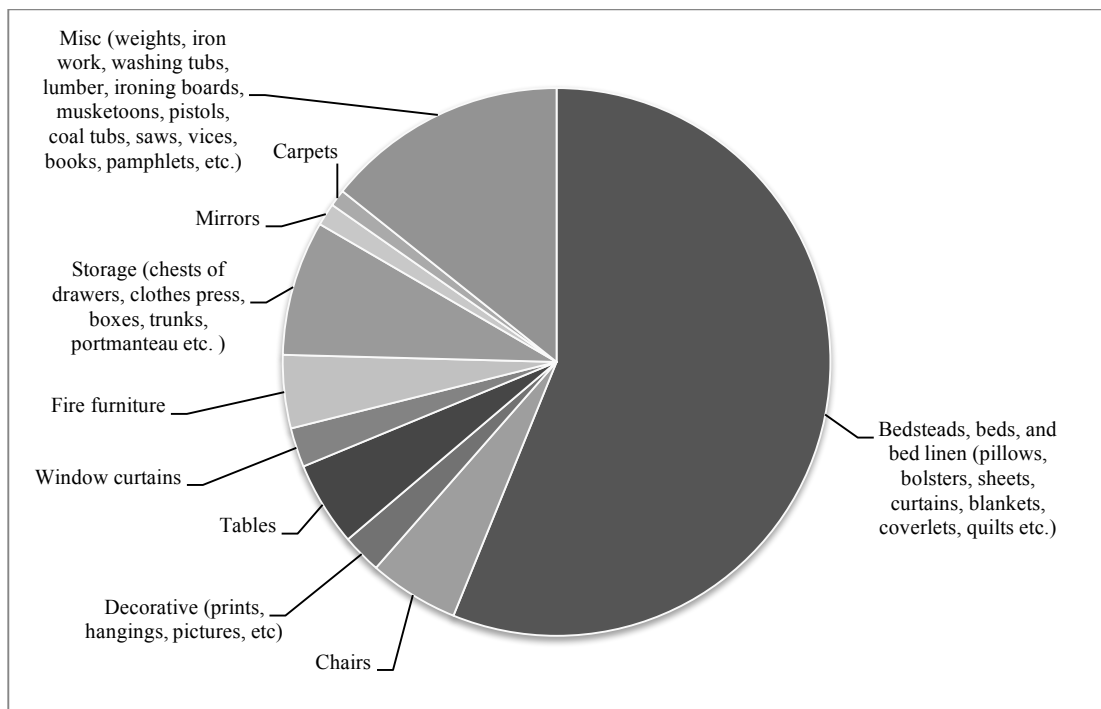


Fig 7: Chart to show contents of 'servant' inventory sample, 1700-1800

framed and glazed'.⁴²⁹ Similarly the 'maids room' in Richard Davies' coffee house on Mitre Court in Fleet Street was provided with two volumes of Gulliver's Travels as well as three unspecified 'books & some phamphlets'.⁴³⁰ It is worth mentioning here that the goods listed in the inventories were only the things which were provided for these rooms by householders; these items would have been joined by goods already in the possession of the servant which likely had a substantial impact on the 'feel' of the room. A hat and cloak hung up on a hook on the wall, a newspaper cutting fixed to the wall and a box beside the bed would more clearly mark out the presence of a servant within this space, and offer a degree of personalisation of it.

*

Although we are accustomed to thinking in terms of a comparison between household members, it might be more instructive to compare the room provided for a servant whilst in place with those that were occupied outside of it.⁴³¹ The bed provided in the household in which the servant served intersected with intermittent return to familial residences as well as periods in rented lodgings.⁴³² More research on the sleeping arrangements of labouring families would be needed before conclusions could be drawn, but given what we know about the continuation of multi-purpose rooms in the poorest rural households and the cramped conditions of many urban interiors, it seems likely that the room provided by their masters and mistresses would often have been the first experience of sleeping in a room solely outfitted for that purpose.⁴³³ Although lodging houses varied widely in quality, those within the meagre resources of most servants were hardly the most comfortable of resting places. The description of one servant's lodgings after leaving her place suggests servants might be acutely aware of how little their meagre cash wages could provide. Her master, visiting her lodging to search her box, described the room as

⁴²⁹ Richard Knight, 1752, PROB 31/352/75, NA, GM transcript; Nicholas Browning, 1800. On wallpaper for servant's rooms see Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 177.

⁴³⁰ Richard Davies, 1778.

⁴³¹ This point is made in Hecht, *Domestic Servant Class*, p. 109.

⁴³² Peter Clark suggested London operated like a set of 'revolving doors' for migrants, see P. Clark, 'Migration in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries' in P. Clark and D. Souden (eds), *Migration and Society in Early Modern England*, (London, 1987), p. 232.

⁴³³ On the living arrangements of the poor see McEwan and Sharpe, *Accommodating Poverty*; R. Mather, *The Home-Making of the English Working Class: Domestic Life and Popular Radicalism, c. 1790-1820*, PhD thesis, QMUL, (forthcoming).

having ‘only a feather-bed, no furniture, the bed lay on the floor’.⁴³⁴ Another servant who had been out of place a ‘long while’ and had managed to maintain herself by selling her things, was found by a neighbour of her past master ‘sleeping in the necessary’.⁴³⁵ Joseph Harley’s recent examination of the scanty and uncomfortable material environment of the workhouse provides another lens through which to understand these spaces.⁴³⁶ Clearly low status when compared to other bedchambers in the household, these rooms should also be considered in relation to other spaces servants inhabited, and in the context of servants’ life histories.

As much as servants’ rooms indicated the social distinction between householder and servant, they also registered the gendered identities of the servant, and their status as (usually) young single people.⁴³⁷ These spaces served not only to furnish difference between master and servant, but to assist the servant in the formation of their own identity as a young man or woman of the labouring poor. Depending on the social and geographical background from which the servant came, and the length of time they had already been in service, the room they were provided with by their master and mistress might have been the first room in which their gender received material configuration. It is quite possible that prior to their place in service, both male and female servants had been accommodated in multi-occupancy and multi-functional rooms alongside other members of the household. The ways in which these rooms were furnished suggests that these spaces were not only concerned to reiterate the subordinate position of servants within the household, but to prepare them for life outside of it. Although the bedchamber is recognised as a gendered site of much significance, exploration of it is generally restricted to householders, and those responsible for the acquisition of goods.⁴³⁸ Although the number of rooms in the servant sample that identify the gender of the occupants is small (and gender is not identified in the broader garret sample which identifies rooms only as ‘garret’ or ‘attick’), it suggests important differences between the ways in which rooms were furnished for male and female servants.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁴ *OBP*, September 1788, trial of Martha Burgess, (t17880910-72).

⁴³⁵ *OBP*, February 1793, trial of John Curtis, (t17930220-48).

⁴³⁶ Harley, ‘Material Lives of the Poor’, pp. 71-103, esp. pp. 85-90.

⁴³⁷ Ponsonby and Hussey, *Single Homemaker*.

⁴³⁸ Gowing, ‘Twinkling’, p. 284; H. Morgan, *Between the Sheets: Reading Beds and Chambers in Late-Medieval England*, PhD thesis, University of York, (2014), p. 179.

⁴³⁹ For ‘attick’ see Gawler Gryffyth Rickman, 1800.

The inventories of ‘maids’ rooms suggest that the rooms of female servants might have resembled the scene of Jean-Frédéric Schall’s late eighteenth painting *Girl with a birdcage seating on a bed* (fig. 8).⁴⁴⁰ Two examples can be used to sketch-out the material parameters of these spaces. William Snelling’s maid’s garret, inventoried in 1740, for example, listed:

Two bedsteads and curtains, five feather beds, two bolsters, two quilts, two wainscott presses, five trunks, one chest of drawers, two boxes, two squabs, one brass hearth, two chairs, one table, one dressing glass, one alarum, two folding boards, a parcell of china, some earthenware and glass ware.⁴⁴¹

In 1800, the maid’s room of the baker Nicholas Browning listed:

A beech bedstead with sacking furniture, half inch blue cheque furniture, straw mattress, old tick, feather bed bolster, one pillow, three blankets, striped cotton patchwork, pair of cotton window curtains, wainscoat dressing chest of drawers, oval swing glass, deal table with drawer, beech chair with matted seat, four coloured prints framed and glazed, four other prints framed and glazed, old hair trunk.⁴⁴²

Although, as John Crowley has suggested, ‘comfort’ is a historically determined category, it also had a gendered dimension.⁴⁴³ The rooms identified as being occupied by female servants tended to be provided with more beds (or mattresses) than those of male servants. Where the gender of the occupants is indicated, female servants were provided with almost double the number of beds per bedstead than their male counterparts.⁴⁴⁴ Snelling’s maids, for example, were provided with five feather beds for two bedsteads. His men, in contrast, received one bed for each of the three bedsteads in the room. Female servants also appear to have been more generously provided with blankets, pillows and coverlets than male servants. The provision of window curtains, bed curtains and floor coverings also appears to have predominated in female servants’ rooms. The sample is too small and description too scanty for significant conclusions to be drawn about distinction in decorative styles and materials between the rooms of male and female servants, but the predominance of material comforts in the rooms of female servants must have altered the aesthetic of these spaces, and it might be suggested that the ‘plad’ curtains of Snelling’s men’s

⁴⁴⁰ On the significant distinction between the representation of French and English domestic spaces see Adamson, ‘The Case of the Missing Footstool’, p. 200-1.

⁴⁴¹ William Snelling, 1740.

⁴⁴² Nicholas Browning, 1800.

⁴⁴³ Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort*.

⁴⁴⁴ Appendix 3b.

room registered a different aesthetic than the unspecified curtains of the bedstead provided for the maids of the house. Although the small size of the sample makes an analysis of change over time difficult, it is likely that material developments over the eighteenth century reiterated distinctions of gender; the cotton window curtains in the room provided for Nicholas Browning's maid, for example, probably marked out the femininity of its occupant.

There were other significant differences in the furnishing of the spaces allocated for male servants and for female servants too. Looking glasses, for example, were commonly included in the inventories of the rooms occupied by female servants, and much less so in those occupied by male servants. Looking glasses, swing glasses, and dressing glasses were also to be found in a number of garret rooms, and may indicate that these rooms were intended for female occupants, although, it has to be said, a 'dressing glass' was also provided for the male clerk in Thomas Robinson's house.⁴⁴⁵ When the maid's room was provided with a table and dressing glass as they were in the two examples above, the room arguably provided a similar function to the toilette of her mistress, albeit in a more materially modest manner.⁴⁴⁶

There was also an important difference in the storage solutions offered to male and female servants. Snelling's maids were fairly typical among female servants in the second half of the eighteenth century for being provided with 'two wainscott presses, five trunks, one chest of drawers, two boxes'.⁴⁴⁷ Female servants were provided with a variety of storage solutions across the sample including a 'cypress box', 'a press', 'a wainscoat chest of drawers', 'a large wainscoat chest with handles', and 'wainscoat dressing chest of drawers'.⁴⁴⁸ The rooms of male servants, on the other hand, were less likely to be provided with item of storage furniture, or were furnished with portmanteaus, trunks, chests and boxes.⁴⁴⁹ The 'mans garret' in Thomas Robinson's house, for example, was provided with '1 box'. Male servants, it

⁴⁴⁵ For mirrors see William Snelling, 1740; George Bratwaite, 1746; Thomas Shackleton, 1750; Benjamin Axford, 1756; Richard Davies, 1778; George Perring, 1780, William George Blachford, 1793.

⁴⁴⁶ See below, p. 138.

⁴⁴⁷ William Snelling, 1740.

⁴⁴⁸ For examples see Caleb Booth, 1714, Richard Knight, 1752, Richard Davies, 1778, Nicholas Browning, 1800. For the difference between a chest and a chest of drawers see Overton et al, *Production and Consumption* pp. 90-92. For these authors, the difference was explained by the multiplication of personal possessions.

⁴⁴⁹ William Snelling, 1740; Richard Davies, 1778.

appears, were generally expected to store the goods in their possession in the boxes they brought to their place with them, at separate lodgings, or in communal boxes, chests, and trunks. The careful stowing away of goods appears to have been more significant for female servants than it was for their male counterparts, and reiterates the importance of service as a period in which female servants acquired and safeguarded goods for use in later life.⁴⁵⁰



Fig 8. Jean-Frédéric Schall, *Girl with a birdcage seating on a bed*, late 18th century, oil on panel, (c) Victoria and Albert Museum.

Other gendered signifiers were suggested in the sample. The rooms in which male servants slept were frequently marked with objects relating to their work. The men's lodging in Christian Tiethen's house on Lemon Street listed not only the bedsteads, bolsters, coverlids and blankets expected of bedchambers, but also a variety of tools including '2 saws, a square, stock, pincers, hatchet, standing vice, iron pot, lock latch, old iron'.⁴⁵¹ Although this room was probably occupied by apprentices in Tiethen's sugar-baking business, it is possible that a male domestic or a 'lad' also slept alongside them. The rooms occupied by coachmen also listed the tools of their

⁴⁵⁰ Hussey and Ponsonby, *Single Homemaker*, p. 91. Also see chapter three.

⁴⁵¹ Christian Tiethen, 1761.

trade. The coachman's room in William Snelling's house, for example, listed 'one pair of large scales, five iron weights' and 'two pair of stops'. Horse furniture and items associated with the equipage were also listed in garret rooms. The variety of goods which could be listed in rooms such as this is suggested by the inventory for George Bratwaite's 'back' garret in Lombard Street, which listed:

An old feather bed, pillow, piece of covering, one side saddle, bridle, one other side saddle, one bridle, 2 pieces of covering, four curtains, pieces of old wood work, a picture, rodde, chair, an old bedstead, & lumber, Garden Tools, 2 old shew glasses, portmanteau, some wood work and lumber.⁴⁵²

Likewise, the inventory for Snelling's 'men's' garret listed 'two musketoons, three pistols, one pair of holsters, one hanger' alongside two bedsteads with 'plad' curtains, an easy chair, and a variety of trunks and chests'. Although weapons, weights, tools and horse furniture would certainly have marked out the men's garret as a masculine space, tools were not limited only to the rooms of male servants.⁴⁵³ Snelling's maids, for example, were provided with two 'folding boards', presumably to assist with the laundry. Away from the hustle and bustle of the kitchen and yard, the garret was commonly used as a place to dry washing, and it is possible that the tables and chairs found in garret rooms were occupied by female servants mending clothing and linens, and otherwise tending to the business of the house.⁴⁵⁴ The fact that the tools of servitude were found in the spaces associated with rest and recuperation confirms how difficult a distinction between home and work, labour and leisure was for servants at the end of the eighteenth century.

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If the chambers in which servants slept registered their gendered identity and their role within the household, the act and material culture of sleep also had a close association with the individual, and may have altered the ways in which servants related to the space in which it took place.⁴⁵⁵ The significance of the spaces allocated for sleep and the close association these spaces had with particular individuals is

⁴⁵² George Bratwaite, 1746. Also see Luke Hepworth, 1740.

⁴⁵³ On the fluid relationship between gender and decoration in the rooms of students in the nineteenth century see Hamlett, *Material Relations*, esp. pp. 159-163.

⁴⁵⁴ On chairs as used for work or performance of activity and not relaxation see Adamson, 'The Case of the Missing Footstool', pp. 197-8.

⁴⁵⁵ On this see Melville, *Use and Organisation of Domestic Space*, p. 98-99.

indicated in the inventory sample. What is interesting is not counting the adjective ‘servant’ as an estimate of servant numbers, *pace* Overton et al, but the existence of the adjective itself.⁴⁵⁶ The identification of a room or object with the adjective ‘servant’ disrupts understandings of the domestic space simply as the property of the householder. When rooms or objects are identified in inventories with the adjective ‘servant’, servants’ ‘involuntary consumption’ of domestic material culture becomes apparent.⁴⁵⁷ The close association between the bedchamber and the individual (or individuals) who slept in them is suggested by the fact that all the rooms identified by the adjective ‘servant’ or similar had beds or bedsteads in them.⁴⁵⁸ Bedchambers were not only identified with servants but with named members of the family. This nomenclature reiterates the significant relationship between the space of sleeping and the individual, but also suggests the distinct relationship that servants had to the domestic space. Whereas named chambers refer to a specific individual within the family, the ‘servants’ room’ referred to a household position occupied by a number of individuals. Although the nomenclature suggests a room outfitted for whoever happened to occupy the household position at the time, and hints at the turnover of servants within the domestic space, the temporary nature of the residency of servants need not suggest the insignificance of this space. In domestic parlance, the space might have been referred to as occupied by a specific individual or group of individuals, at least for a moment in time. Although it is not clear from the inventories, it might also have been the case that some of the other named chambers referred to rooms occupied by servants. The 1740 inventory of John Mitford’s house in Bow, for example, lists a ‘Johns room’ which was furnished in a very similar manner to the rooms of male servants elsewhere in the sample, and an ‘Anns Chamber’ which was furnished in a similar way to the ‘maids’ rooms elsewhere.⁴⁵⁹ It seems likely that John and Ann were long-serving servants or apprentices rather than a member of the family.

The servant’s (or servants’) room appears to have operated as a discrete realm of ownership and belonging within the household. Although few of the servant deponents in Laura Gowing’s study of the seventeenth century referred to their bed

⁴⁵⁶ Overton et al, *Production and Consumption*, p. 81.

⁴⁵⁷ For ‘involuntary consumption’ see Styles, ‘Lodging at the Old Bailey’, pp. 61-80, esp. p. 62.

⁴⁵⁸ The only exception is a ‘servants hall’, William Durant, 1709.

⁴⁵⁹ John Mitford, 1740.

as ‘my bed’, the opposite was true of witnesses in the eighteenth-century *Proceedings*.⁴⁶⁰ Not only do eighteenth-century servants frequently identify the bed on which they slept with the possessive pronoun, but they also located that bed within a room identified in the same way. Mary Roberts, for example, a servant to a publican in Bishopsgate Street referred to her bed as ‘my bed’ which she located within ‘my room where I lie’.⁴⁶¹ Language has long been understood to offer insight into the ways in which contemporaries perceived their world. The significance of this type of possessive language has started to be explored by Jennifer Melville who suggested that the use of personal pronouns ‘illustrate[s] certain aspects of the relationship between the subject and the object’.⁴⁶² Masters and mistresses who appeared at the court of the Old Bailey similarly referred to the bed on which servants slept as ‘the maid’s bed’, and the room in which their servant slept as ‘her room’, ‘his room’ or as the ‘maid’s room’.⁴⁶³ The fact that masters and mistresses acquiesced in this linguistic practice suggests that they too recognised something of servants’ possession of discrete spaces and objects within the domestic space owned and ruled, usually, by the patriarch. What it was that defined this sense of ownership over domestic space and its material accoutrements, and how far the boundaries of that material jurisdiction could be pushed is far from clear. John Styles has suggested that a similar type of material fluidity was enacted within lodging rooms, with lodgers frequently claiming possession over (and pawning) the goods provided for them for the duration of their tenancy.⁴⁶⁴ A suggestion of how this sense of ownership might have been enacted for servants is indicated in a case that appeared before the court in February 1785. Jacques Philip Hardy was a French servant who was accused of stealing from his mistress and hiding the loot in a box provided for him in his lodging room. The mistress described her servant’s relationship with the box provided for him as one of appropriation. She claimed ‘there were a great

⁴⁶⁰ Gowing, ‘Twinkling’, p. 292.

⁴⁶¹ *OBP*, January 1754, trial of John Smith (t17540116-50). Also see. *OBP*, May 1790, trial of James Flindell, (t17900526-50).

⁴⁶² Melville, *Use and Organisation of Domestic Space*, p. 90.

⁴⁶³ See, for example, *OBP*, April 1749, trial of Patrick Hayes, (t17490411-24); *OBP*, January 1751, trial of Thomas Clements, Anthony Westley, (t17510116-49); *OBP*, September 1770, trial of Elizabeth Taylor, Robert Lucas, (t17700912-22); *OBP*, October 1771, trial of Richard Bigglestone, (t17711023-65); *OBP*, April 1796, trial of Elizabeth Pink (t17960406-2). *OBP*, April 1818, trial of Archibald M’Phail, (t18180401-121). For robber referring to ‘maid’s room’ see *OBP*, December 1733, trial of William Brown, Joseph Whitlock, (t17221205-52); *OBP*, October 1739, trial of Cuthbert Wharton, John Deacon, (t17391017-35).

⁴⁶⁴ Styles, ‘Lodging at the Old Bailey’, esp. p 68. Also see L. McKay, ‘Why They Stole, Women in the Old Bailey, 1779-1789’, *JSH*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1999), pp. 623-639.

number of chests and drawers, and boxes, *which he made his*’ and that there was a box ‘which was part of the furniture of the room, which was *appropriated to him*, and used entirely for his own effects’.⁴⁶⁵ Of course the mistress’s identification of the goods solely with the servant served to reiterate his guilt, and prove her case, but it is clear that a sense of ownership or responsibility for a particular space could be marked out by use, and by the storage of personal possessions. The complex relationship between the use and ownership of material goods is explored further in chapter four.

Diligence and Dissipation

The bedchambers in which servants slept are typically understood as accessible spaces, defined by the lack of privacy. This section challenges this understanding and explores the complexity of contemporary understandings of physical withdrawal through an examination of two late-eighteenth century images of servant maids in their bedchambers. These images were part of James Northcote’s series *Diligence and Dissipation* which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1796, and produced as a printed series to be ‘framed as furniture’ or bound ‘together in a portfolio’ the following year. Although the series has not featured significantly in historical or art historical scholarship, the fourth print (fig. 9) was included in Gilbert’s catalogue for the exhibition on ‘back-stairs furniture’, and was used as an ‘inscription of the real’ (to use Kate Retford’s phrase), and to illustrate how a maid’s bedchamber might have looked.⁴⁶⁶ Although these images offer rare visual evidence of these spaces, and contribute to our understanding of the material constitution of them, attitudes towards pictorial representation are now much more complex. Scholars have moved away from an understanding of representations of the domestic space as sources of historic ‘reality’ towards understandings of them as ‘imagined interiors’.⁴⁶⁷ Rather than dismissing representation as a source altogether, however, there is an acknowledgement that, providing we recognise the constructed nature of these images, they offer important insights into contemporary understandings.

⁴⁶⁵ *OBP*, February 1785, trial of Jacques Philip Hardy (t17850223-15), my emphasis.

⁴⁶⁶ K. Retford, ‘From the Interior to Interiority: The Conversation Piece in Georgian England’, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 20. No. 4, (2007), p. 292.

⁴⁶⁷ C. Grant and J. Aynsley (eds), *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior Since the Renaissance*, (London, 2006).

The series tells the story of the ‘modest’ girl and the ‘wanton’ in a type of modern moral story typified by Hogarth’s *Industry and Idleness*. The basic story is encapsulated in the first print where the modest girl diligently completes her work whilst the wanton flirts with male admirers in the kitchen. The second print reiterates the character of the two young women; the modest girl listens attentively to the advice of the housekeeper in her room; the wanton yawns. It is in the third and fourth print that each maid is represented in ‘her’ bedchamber, the possessive pronoun reflecting something of contemporary practice identified in inventories and the *Proceedings*. In plate three, the wanton is depicted lazing on a dishevelled bed awaiting a ‘midnight libertine’ amid a disordered room. Plate four, in contrast, shows the modest maid attending to her religious duties in her chamber by candlelight (fig.10). In the following plates, Northcote depicts the outcome of these chamber practices. The wanton girl, following her misconduct, is thrown out into the city streets, and arrives at plate seven at a scene of utter debauchery in a public house. Plate six sees the modest who has continued in the household of her master reject, Pamela-esque, the advances of her employer in *his* chamber- who following Mr B. is all the more enamoured with her by her refusals, and in plate eight proposes marriage.⁴⁶⁸ In plate nine the two women are brought together again in a garret bedchamber where the wanton lays dying. The contrast between the relative comforts of the maid’s bedchamber in the house of her master, and the poverty of the garret lodgings available after she had left her place, would have been obvious to contemporaries. The moral message of the series is driven home in the late plate in which we see the modest girl married to her master whilst the wanton is laid in her grave.

Importantly, unlike Hogarth’s *Industry and Idleness*, Northcote’s series was not a commercial success. Something of the reason for this failure is indicated in the report of the critic John Williams on his visit to the exhibition. Williams suggested that:

⁴⁶⁸ On the vulnerability of servants in their master’s bedchambers see *OBP*, December 1770, trial of Charles Earle, (t17701205-39). In the Northcote image, the maid’s broom is used to justify the girl’s presence in his chamber.



Fig 9. Thomas Hellyer (after James Northcote), *Diligence and Dissipation*, Plate 3, *The Wanton in her Bed Chamber*, (London, 1796), stipple, etching, BM.



Fig 10. Thomas Hellyer (after James Northcote), *Diligence and Dissipation, Plate 4, The Modest Girl in her Bed Chamber*, (London, 1796), stipple, etching, BM.

the general idea is openly stolen from Hogarth's very instructive and very ably told story of the Idle and Industrious Apprentices, with a collateral reference to Pamela... Though this series of domestic pictures are a palpable imitation of Hogarth, they are widely unlike him in spirit, morality, and application... in our opinion, the tendencies of these pictures are diametrically opposite to the declared intention of the artist, and that they rather operate to corrupt, than correct the youthful understanding... we retired from the contemplation of this chain of motely incongruity, with sensations of displeasure; for the vicious part of the story is so filthily expressed, and the virtuous part so ineffectually, that we felt a desire to forget the image of the first, and were uninterested in the fortunes of the other.⁴⁶⁹

Williams' interpretation, or rather, misinterpretation, of the paintings is significant. Undoubtedly, Williams' difficulty was influenced by the strange way in which the series was exhibited; the paintings were hung in the same room but non-sequentially, with other works punctuating the intended moral message of the artist.⁴⁷⁰ An accompanying description of the series authored by James Northcote was published soon after and attempted to restore the edifying message of the series. The text was advertised as being 'necessary to Persons visiting the Exhibition as the Manner in which these most interesting Pictures are there separated confused them, and prevents the Effects they have when seen together'.⁴⁷¹ Williams' conclusion, that the series was 'filthily expressed' and operated to 'corrupt' rather than 'correct' understanding, appears to have been about more than the haphazard way in which these images were exhibited. Northcote's failure can be seen, at least in part, to relate to the complex associations of servants' bedchambers at the end of the century. The withdrawal of the servant maids appears too problematic a subject to fit with Northcote's edifying mission and with contemporary notions of the proper functioning of the eighteenth-century domestic space.

There is no doubt that Northcote was attempting to capitalise on the commercial success of Hogarth's 1747 series *Industry and Idleness*. Hogarth had contrasted the divergent paths of two male apprentices to contemporary acclaim in a similar series of scenarios. Hogarth's images confirm the significance of the domestic space as a representation strategy, and indicate how problematic a setting it could be for servants and apprentices. Although the proud patriarch frequently commissioned

⁴⁶⁹ [J. Williams], *A Critical Guide to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy for 1796*, by Anthony Pasquin, (London, 1797), p. 16.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

⁴⁷¹ *Daily Advertiser*, (London, England, Tuesday, May 10, 1796), issue 21041.

conversation pieces and portraits from the comfort of home, the depiction of male apprentices appears more problematic.⁴⁷² It is notable that Hogarth, the master of contemporary mores, chose to depict the industrious Francis Goodchild in spaces aligned with work, religion, and public office rather than the domestic interior. It is only after Goodchild's marriage that he is depicted in a domestic setting, and even then he appears at an open window offering alms to the poor (fig. 11). Hogarth's external composition reiterated the young man's continued integration and participation in communal life, even as he celebrated his domestic decency. The domestic space, and particularly the bedchamber, appears too ambiguous a site, and too difficult a subject matter, through which to portray Francis Goodchild's morality and domestic maturity. The bedchamber was, instead, reserved for Tom Idle (fig. 12).⁴⁷³ Hogarth's infamous garret scene drew on a whole host of contemporary images which used the garret as an indicator of moral depravity, poverty and downfall, particularly – but not exclusively – for men. In the seventh plate, the squalor of the garret offered an unambiguous warning to apprentices of the misery and material ruination that came from idleness, disobedience and sexual misconduct. The dilapidated state of the room in which the apprentice lodged offered clear evidence of his lack of worth, credit, and financial stability. Not only are the walls cracked, and the floor bare, but the bed – that mainstay of domestic comfort and security – is broken. Hogarth depicts Tom Idle's nocturnal habits as the inversion of the marital bed and the reproduction of the domestic economy that it suggested. Sharing his bed with a common prostitute, Idle not only alienated his sparse resources, but wasted his 'seed'. Hogarth's image clearly suggests the illicit connotations of the bedchamber. The adverse associations of private spaces outlined in the introduction are here made apparent; away from the intrusion of the master, the bedchamber was aligned with illicit secrecy. Not only has the apprentice double bolted and locked the door, but had also jimmied boards up against it, and covered the window with the petticoat belonging to his companion. The complex and overtly sexual associations of the bedchamber were employed by Hogarth to illustrate Tom Idle's rejection of normative modes of masculine behaviour and the domestic comforts that went with it.

⁴⁷² On the representation of men and domestic space see Harvey, 'Men Making Home', p. 520.

⁴⁷³ See A. French and G. Waterfield, *Below Stairs: 400 Years of Servants' Portraits*, (London, 2003), pp. 132-3.



Fig. 11. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, Plate 6, *The Industrious 'Prentice out of his Time, & Married to his Master's Daughter*, (London, 1747), etching, engraving, BM.



Fig 12. William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*, Plate 7, *The Idle 'Prentice return'd from Sea, & in a Garret with a common Prostitute*, (London, 1747), etching, engraving, BM.



Fig. 13 Thomas Chambers (after Philippe Mercier), *Pamela*, (c. 1727-c.1789), National Trust, Felbrigg, (c) National Trust/ Sue James

The relationship of female servants to bedchambers in contemporary representations was more complex still. As we have seen, the female chamber was a sexually-charged space in the eighteenth century. Karen Harvey has demonstrated that in eighteenth-century erotica ‘scenes of sexual intimacy invariably took place in women’s rooms’, and that in such texts women’s bodies were typically imagined in architectural form.⁴⁷⁴ If the ‘collateral reference to Pamela’ in Northcote’s series is obvious enough in the diligent maid’s marriage to her master, there is another, more troubling, connection which centres on the representation of the bedchamber. Pamela’s bedchamber is an important site of action in Richardson’s text; it is here that Mr B masterminds his attempted rape of his young servant maid, assisted by Mrs Jewkes, her devious bedfellow. Although Richardson’s story was one of ‘virtue rewarded’, the contemporary furore surrounding the novel focused on the ‘warm’

⁴⁷⁴ K. Harvey, ‘Eroticizing the Interior’ in *Imagined Interiors*, p. 132; Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture*, (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 158- 168.

scene in the bedchamber as evidence of its wickedness. If representation of servants' bedchambers in text was difficult enough, visual representation was more problematic still. An illustration of the bedchamber did not, for example, appear in the official (and carefully-curated) edition of the Pamela narrative authorised by Richardson. The depictions of Pamela in her bedchamber had very little to do with Richardson's tightly moralistic and edifying conception of his own novel and more to do with the titillating pirated versions designed with male readers in mind (see fig. 13).⁴⁷⁵ The Pamela images drew on the ambiguous status of the sexuality of female servants in the period, and of their bedchambers. According to the eighteenth-century visual imagination, the servant maid's chamber was inextricably linked with the sexuality of its occupant. The proximity of the bed, the necessity of undress, and the opportunity for withdrawal combined to produce a powerful association of that space as sexually appealing, tempting and dangerous.

The difficulty of representing servants' chambers stemmed not only from their sexual connotations, but from the independent action depicted within. The absence of the master in much of Northcote's narrative is significant. The aim of the series was not to show that the maid servants were under constant surveillance, but to demonstrate that their private behaviours had consequences for their character.⁴⁷⁶ The importance of a correlation between public and private morality and behaviour was a mainstay of eighteenth-century advice literature and religious instruction addressed to servants. The naturally duplicitous nature of servants was a common complaint of eighteenth-century authors, and masters and mistresses were clear that their servants behaved one way when under their surveillance, and in another when out of their sight. The anxiety over eye service, of the servant behaving one way in the sight of her master and mistress, and another behind their backs or locked in her chamber, is clearly evident in Northcote's prints. The lack of surveillance is a pictorial device which allowed Northcote to represent the 'true' nature of each of these individuals, which was thought to be revealed when nobody was watching. Although appealing to a visual device common to eighteenth-century visual culture, Northcote failed to recognise how problematic the representation of physical withdrawal would be when

⁴⁷⁵ On the Pamela illustrations see K. Retford, 'The Crown and Glory of Woman: Female Chastity in Eighteenth Century British Art' in D. Arnold and D. P. Corbett, *A Companion to British Art: 1600 to the Present* (Chichester, 2013), pp. 488-495.

⁴⁷⁶ Northcote, *Diligence and Dissipation*, p. iii.

applied to servant maids. Images which positively depicted patriarchs in their studies or ladies in their dressing rooms might have proliferated in this period; representations of servant maids in their bedchambers did not. The subject of the prints, and the commercial failure of the series, offers an insight into contemporary anxiety about the withdrawal of servant maids within the domestic space. Although Northcote's series was intended to warn servants of the inevitable repercussions of behaviour conducted behind closed doors, contemporaries were well aware that the Janus-faced maid often went undetected.

The third print, of the dissipated maid in her bedchamber, clearly illustrates some of the contemporary concerns about the withdrawal of female servants. For the wanton maid, the possibility of physical apartness created the opportunity for sexual encounter. Reclining undressed on her bed with the curtains pushed back, the maid invited the 'midnight libertine' into her room.⁴⁷⁷ Although the wanton maid 'dallied' with male admirers in the space of the kitchen, it was only within the walls of her bedchamber that the illicit action was made explicit. The print also portrays broader concerns about the withdrawal of women in general. The broken mirror, the advertisement for perfume on the wall, and the clothes scattered across the floor testify to the maid's room as a site of transformation and adornment. As recent work on the female dressing room and toilette has indicated, this was a site where the anxieties about masquerade, concealment and dress as a threat to the authenticity demanded of the eighteenth century were figured and made material. This was all the more problematic for servant maids, whose penchant for clothes 'above their station' not only threatened to disrupt their social position but also encouraged similar behaviour in their mistresses. If the eighteenth-century cultural imagination pleased in the revealing representations of the toilette of the leisured female, this was not the case for servants' rooms.⁴⁷⁸ Although Northcote's print offered an unambiguous critique of the 'private' behaviours of the dissipated maid, it also revealed the narrow line between the appropriate and inappropriate behaviour of the bedchamber. Not only did contemporary advice literature offer advice to servant maids about the necessity of a 'neat' and 'clean' appearance, but, as we have seen, the inventory evidence suggested that many female servants' rooms were provided

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁷⁸ T. Chico, *Designing Women: The Dressing Room in Eighteenth Century Culture*, (Lewisburg, 2005).

with a looking glass. Clearly, masters and mistresses felt that an element of beautification (or at least personal tidiness) was an important activity of the rooms of maid servants. If the advertisement for perfume in the room of the diligent suggests this was an unnecessary luxury which should be scorned, servants' chambers might have functioned as a space in which handkerchiefs were tied around shoulders, hair pushed beneath caps, and gowns and aprons smoothed. It might also have been this space in which servants applied the many 'recipes' included in domestic advice literature about how to make hair black, teeth clean and hands soft, or, at least to check on the progress of these potions in the looking glass.

Both prints also depict the bedchamber as a site of independent reading, and reflect something of the ambiguity over novel reading – particularly for servant maids. The widespread concern about novel reading – particularly among women of the lower sorts - has been the subject of much study.⁴⁷⁹ Like the female toilette, it is the 'transformative' potential of the novel that provoked anxiety. It is significant that the novel the dissipated maid is depicted enjoying is *Le Sopha*, a French libertine novel which appeared in the fourth plate of Hogarth's *Marriage A-la Mode*, *The Toilette*. Not only did the novel encourage the sort of erotic fantasies which were deemed inappropriate for chaste young servant girls, but its transformative narrative (in which a man is reincarnated as a sofa) was a difficult subject for those who insisted that servants resign themselves to their place in the divinely-ordained social and domestic hierarchy. The dangers offered by the imaginative potential of the novel are made clear in Northcote's introduction to the series. The artist remarked:

The pride and folly of her character is observable in the name of Eliza, apprehended to one of her letters dropped upon the pillow; and which, taught by some of her silly romances, she has chosen as a more elegant appellation, and one more suitable to her ambitious hopes, than the vulgar name of Betty, by which she imagines herself degraded in her domestic situation.⁴⁸⁰

Not only did novel reading encourage foolhardy ambitions and pretensions amongst servant maids, but it suggested the neglect of domestic responsibilities, and a temporal commitment to an activity which was deemed inappropriate for those that

⁴⁷⁹ J. Radway, 'Women Read the Romance: The Interaction of Text and Context', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (1983), pp. 53-78.

⁴⁸⁰ Northcote, *Diligence and Dissipation*, p. 134.

laboured for a living.⁴⁸¹ Nocturnal reading had the added anxiety of the necessity of candlelight; the broken candle in the third plate hints not only at the threat of fire which might consume the entirety of the domestic space, but also to the waste of the domestic economy.⁴⁸² Of course, independent reading might also serve to shore-up servants' subordination, and bolster their domestic skill. In Sarah Trimmer's 1787 *The Servant's Friend*, for example, the servants reject romances for domestic advice literature to help them 'know their duty'.⁴⁸³ It is this type of text – *The Young Man's Best Companion* – as well as a copy of the Prayer Book that is depicted on the chair in Northcote's image of the diligent. The religious and edifying nature of these texts is further reiterated by the prints and decoration which adorn her room. A print inculcating the *Duty of Servants* and a sampler 'worked by herself, containing the Lord's Prayer'—reiterated that private space need not reflect illicit secrecy. The print of *connubial happiness* similarly suggests the imaginative space offered by the bedchamber was not always utilised for socially inappropriate schemes. Northcote suggested the print demonstrated a 'well-regulated disposition to support the proper duties of a wife, *when it shall please Providence* to place her in that situation'.⁴⁸⁴

It has been argued here that the commercial failure of Northcote's series was, in part, a response to the bedchamber setting. In contrast to Hogarth, who depicted only the idle in his bedchamber, it was not only the 'corruptness' of the wanton that Northcote sought to illustrate through the representation of the bedchamber, but also the moral decency of the diligent. Although contemporaries were clear about the negative connotations of privacy for servant maids, they were less convinced about its positive associations. As we have seen, Williams claimed that 'the vicious part of the story is so filthily expressed, and the virtuous part so ineffectually' that the series operated to 'corrupt, [rather] than correct the youthful understanding'.⁴⁸⁵ Aside from the images of Pamela in her bedchamber, these prints are two of only three visual depictions of a servant maid's bedchamber that I have come across that were published in England at this time.⁴⁸⁶ Freed from the genre conventions of erotica, the chamber in Northcote's series can be understood to reflect new understandings of 'private'

⁴⁸¹ Spacks, *Privacy*, p. 30.

⁴⁸² Haywood, *Present for a Servant Maid*, p. 15.

⁴⁸³ Straub, *Domestic Affairs*, p. 161.

⁴⁸⁴ Northcote, *Diligence and Dissipation*, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁵ Williams, *Critical Guide*, p. 16.

⁴⁸⁶ The third appears in Harvey 'Erotizing the Interior', p. 132.

domestic spaces as reflecting ‘authentic’ selfhood.⁴⁸⁷ The choice of setting for the servant maid characters depicted by him can be seen as ill-advised. The association of the bedchamber with physical separation, relative freedom of action and with sexuality made it too problematic a space for the construction of the ‘modest’ maid, and too anxiety-provoking a representation of the wanton.

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Despite their edifying purpose, Northcote’s prints were intended for a viewing public that was made up of the employing classes. Whether servants would have recognised the meaning portrayed by the two bedchamber scenes is far from clear. The servants’ *experiences* of these rooms is, unsurprisingly, difficult to access. If the generally-held belief is servants’ chambers were accessible, subject to surveillance, and experienced as a site of subordination through which the power of the master and mistress was experienced and made manifest, the Northcote prints suggest that this was not necessarily the case. Evidence from the court records appears to confirm this conclusion. Although it is the records of the Foundling Hospital that formed the basis of Samantha K. Williams’ analysis, these records suggest something other than the conclusion of eminent accessibility and constant surveillance arrived at by her. In well over half the number of petitions in which servants requested that the Foundling Hospital care for their illegitimate children, the house of the master and mistress was cited as the location of intercourse. As Williams herself suggested

[o]ne would think that if the couple both worked in service then finding a private place for sexual activity might be difficult...[y]et many couples did manage to have sex in their rooms; over half of cases where place of sex is known were in service residences.⁴⁸⁸

Significantly, the encounters that appeared before the Hospital board do not appear to have been a part of an exploitative sexual encounter between master and servant (a narrative which has been understood to demonstrate the accessibility and vulnerability of the servant in the spaces in which they slept), but part of a legitimate courtship between individuals of equal social status. One Henry Julian for example, is recorded to have ‘seduced [another servant] in October 1839 in her Bed Room in her Masters House They used adjoining Rooms as Bedrooms’ while ‘All the family

⁴⁸⁷ Grant and Aynsley, *Imagined Interiors*, esp. p. 135.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

was at home'.⁴⁸⁹ Just as the dissipate maid pursued her own sexual agenda within the house of her employer, and the diligent looked forward to a future of *connubial happiness* from her bedchamber, independent romances might also occur in the chambers of servants in middling households. As Meldrum suggests the 'extensive evidence of sexual activities of servants with or under the noses of fellow household members' suggests 'some forms of private seclusion were possible some of the time to servants'.⁴⁹⁰

Although the employment of a lock and bolt in the prints by Northcote was a pictorial device to illustrate servants' choice over the accessibility of their bodies, and the carefulness with which they guarded their modesty, it also appears to have reflected contemporary practice.⁴⁹¹ Evidence from the *Proceedings* suggests that servants' rooms were frequently fitted with a lock, and that these rooms were not deemed to be 'accessible at all times'.⁴⁹² Where the servant had sole access to this space, they also appear to have been responsible for the key. When Mary Roberts, the servant to a publican in Bishopsgate Street in 1754 discovered her room had been broken into, she told the court she 'went up to my room where I lie. I had locked the door, and had the key in my hand, but had not put it into the lock [and]...found the door broke open'.⁴⁹³ It is notable that Roberts' door locked from the outside, presumably to secure goods inside, rather than from the inside, to ensure the isolation of its occupant. Servants in public houses and coffee houses, like Roberts, seem to have been particularly likely to have been equipped with a lockable room, presumably to guard against theft by customers and visitors to the house. This might also be a response to the records - the public nature of their households perhaps encouraged more emphatic statements at court about the security with which belongings were stored. On other occasions, the *Proceedings* reveal that servants could also lock their doors from the inside, just as the modest girl had done. Alice Lee, who was servant to a Mr and Mrs Priddle, locked herself in her chamber over night; a female lodger, who claimed to have been raped by her master, suggested that she 'went first to my fellow servants, the maid's room, her door was locked, I could

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁰ Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 125.

⁴⁹¹ On symbolism of locks see Harvey, *Reading Sex*, pp. 162-166.

⁴⁹² See above p. 104.

⁴⁹³ *OBP*, January 1754, trial of John Smith (t17540116-50).

not get in to tell her of it' although she 'knocked four or five times at her door'.⁴⁹⁴ Shutting and locking the door to their room from the inside offered a sense of reassurance over worldly belongings, but it also provided security and safety from interference from outside. Where servants were the sole occupants of the room, it might be understood as a safe space of retreat –or of privacy - providing whoever they sought to keep out did not also have a key.

This is not to undermine the vulnerability of servants within the households in which they served. Not only do the court records reveal that mistresses might keep a key to their servants' rooms, but that masters could access the space by brute force if they so desired. In 1732, for example, a cook maid told another servant and her mistress how her master 'had endeavoured to force into her room and to fling the door off its hinges'.⁴⁹⁵ We do not know how many servants were victim to their master's or mistress's forced access into these spaces; certainly, the majority of rapes and assaults went unreported. It is significant, however, that on this occasion the cook maid was saved from her master's advances by her screams of murder and by a servant in a neighbouring garret opening her window and calling for help. It is clear from this case that members of the household and community *could* intervene to halt access into that space and protect the reputation of master, mistress and maid.⁴⁹⁶ Importantly, servants' withdrawal into their room need not be understood as an attempt to get away from their masters and mistresses, or even as particularly desirable. The statement of the servant Mary Reeves suggests she did not routinely lock the door of her room as she went to bed. Instead, the locking of the door appears to have been the response to a breach of other domestic boundaries, and a fear for her own security as well as that of the house. Reeves reported that she was awoken one night in 1771 as thieves broke into the house; she made no mention of unlocking the door as she crept out of her room to peer over the banister, but suggested that on seeing a light in the hall she 'withdrew into my own room, and locked the door; drew

⁴⁹⁴ *OBP*, February 1775, trial of William Priddle (t17750218-1).

⁴⁹⁵ On this see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 108.

⁴⁹⁶ Also see the literature on domestic violence for a discussion about the extent to which this was the case; Hunt, 'Wife Beating, Domesticity and Women's Independence'; Bailey 'I dye [sic] by Inches'. Also see contemporary accounts: 'We hear that a certain eminent Tradesman of this City has been indicted, and the Bill found against him, for entering his Servant-Maid's Bedchamber, and whipping her with Rods, on some Neglect in her Business; which he repeated three different Times', *General Evening Post*, (London, 18th October 1748) Issue 2352.

up the sash of my own window, and looked out for the watchman'.⁴⁹⁷ Although the lock is celebrated as an important facilitator of private life, it might also suggest fear, mistrust, and the potential permeability of exterior domestic boundaries. Other evidence from the *Proceedings* suggests that servants left chamber doors open throughout the night; the fact that this was not necessarily in response to their master's and mistress's demands of 'accessibility' and surveillance is suggested by the commonsense response of one servant that this was done 'to admit of air' into the chamber.⁴⁹⁸

The evidence from the *Proceedings* suggests that the lack of interference and surveillance was not simply a pictorial device, and was not only provided by the lock. Although masters and mistresses might search servants' rooms in the case of the suspicion of theft, or the birth of an illegitimate child, there is no indication that this was a common domestic practice.⁴⁹⁹ Mary Stevens, the servant of one Mr Charles Dixon of Charter House Street, was clear that 'nobody else had been in that garret that day, that I know of; nobody else had any business'.⁵⁰⁰ There was clearly a gendered and domestic hierarchy which dictated who might have access to this servant's room. Eager to confirm whether anybody else might have accessed the room where Stevens' box was stolen, the court asked whether her mistress might 'occasionally visit your room' to which Stevens answered in the negative, although she confirmed that 'she may go up if she pleases'. The master's access to this space appears far more restricted; the court took it for 'granted' that he was not in his maid's room that day.⁵⁰¹ The rules of admittance were clearly marked out.⁵⁰² As we have seen, a master did not simply barge into the kitchen where a maid's bed was located, but knocked at the door and told the servant within what he wanted.⁵⁰³ Similarly when John Knowles sought to wake his servant William Dickerson on the morning of the 13th of November, he too 'knock'd' at his door.⁵⁰⁴ When the housekeeper Betty Kerton was told by her mistress to make sure that Thomas White,

⁴⁹⁷ *OBP*, April 1771, trial of Benjamin Isaacs John Haines Richard Butcher (t17710410-27).

⁴⁹⁸ *OBP*, May 1768, trial of Thomas Stapleton, John Curtis, Susanna Stapleton, (t7680518-19).

⁴⁹⁹ One mistress sent her servant out of the house on a false errand in order that she could search her room; *OBP*, April 1796, trial of Elizabeth Pink, (t17960406-2).

⁵⁰⁰ *OBP*, May 1790, trial of William Vale, Samuel Thurley, (t17900526-60).

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰² On access to rooms see McEwan, 'The Lodging Exchange'.

⁵⁰³ *OBP*, April 1751, trial of Mary Dunslow, (t17510417-23).

⁵⁰⁴ *OBP*, December 1751, trial of William Dickerson (t17511204-52).

a newly appointed servant to the house in Portland Street, had put his candle out, she went to his door and spoke to him from outside it. She told the court she:

took hold of the handle of the door, the key was on the outside, it was bolted within, and I held the handle of the door while I spoke to him, says I, Thomas I hope you have been very careful to put out your flambeaux safe, I said likewise, I hope you are very careful of your candle; he answer was, he was very careful of his candle.⁵⁰⁵

White is later suspected of theft from the house, and his locked door becomes a feature of the subsequent trial. Although Kerton is emphatic that the door was bolted for she went down ‘with the intention to open the door’ (she told the court that ‘if the door had not been fastened, I should certainly have opened it’), the court are suspicious of her transgression into the room of a male servant. ‘It was not very probable’ they retorted ‘that a person of your modesty and propriety, should have had it in your intention to go into his room’, and asked if ‘upon the footing of your modesty, you did not knock at the door?’⁵⁰⁶ Whether occasioned by the requirements of privacy, the gendered difficulty of proximity to the sleeping space, or a general disinterest in entry into the space, it is clear that this space was not as eminently accessible as has been suggested. Although the *right* of access clearly belonged to their master and mistress, it was not the case that servants were universally subject to it.

The complexity of access to this space is further revealed in the role that servants’ beds played in sickness. The bed provided by their master and mistress was frequently a site of refuge for servants when they were ill. That beds might be the place of recuperation for servants is suggested by the numerous recipes in advice books that recommended concoctions to be taken ‘from the warmth of bed’.⁵⁰⁷ This was equally apparent at court. Elizabeth Jarvis, for example, ‘retreated’ to her ‘own room’ in the house of her master and mistress when she was sick. When her mistress went up to check on her, the servant was in bed and told her mistress ‘she was very poorly indeed, and was very sorry she was obliged to go to bed, to leave me in trouble as I was in then’.⁵⁰⁸ The sickly servant in bed reiterates servants’ place within

⁵⁰⁵ *OBP*, May 1784, trial of Thomas White (t17840526-3).

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁷ S. Davidson, *The History of Medicine: A Review of, and Objections to, the Prevailing Theories on Fevers*, (Newcastle, 1791), p. 70.

⁵⁰⁸ *OBP*, January 1800, trial of Elizabeth Jarvis, (t18000115-20).

the household family, and further complicates the meanings of privacy and solitude within the domicile. Illness demanded not only a warm bed, but also the care, company and attention of other members of the household. The care of the sick was an important part of domestic labour, and the physical contact between mistress and servant reiterated familial bonds and their role in *loco parentis*. When Susannah Cooney found her maid Hannah Spires laying on the ‘stones’ in the yard complaining of tooth ache, she told her ‘if you will not go into the kitchen, go up into the one pair of stairs room and lie down on that bed’.⁵⁰⁹ Spires generally slept on a bed in the kitchen, which was in use throughout the day, and was no place for an ailing maid to recuperate. In illness, the work of the bedchamber was reversed, and the mistress might wait on the servants of the house. Cooney first sent up the youngest maid to see if she wanted breakfast, but after dinner went up herself to enquire whether she was hungry, and made her a plate of boiled bread which she took up to her. Rebecca Random, Elizabeth Jarvis’s mistress, similarly waited on her ‘poorly’ servant; she brought her water, fetched her clean linen out of storage, and warmed a jacket for her to put on, as well lacing her stays and helping her out of bed.

The care offered to servants in their rooms is complicated by the surveillance of these spaces that the care afforded. The attention provided by mistresses is complicated by the fact that the ‘sickness’ of which their servants complained was, in fact, the early stages of labour. When Spires would not come down to join the rest of the family in the evening, Cooney went up to her. She told the court:

I went up, and when I came there I saw something I did not like. I thought to myself there must be a child born, I took up a corner of the bed, and under that there was a child. I called her murdering slut, or something like it... I drove her down stairs to her own bed, which was in the kitchen.

The shooing of the servant back to her own bed in the kitchen dramatically illustrated the boundary between legitimate illness (which would be accommodated within the upstairs chamber), and pain brought about through illegitimate action (which the maid would have to deal with on her own in the kitchen). The familial intimacy, intrusion, and possibility for the secrecy of the chamber become apparent in these cases. Random, in particular, appears to have been acutely aware of what was really going on in her servant’s room; she told Jarvis repeatedly that the pains she was

⁵⁰⁹ *OBP*, January 1751, trial of Hannah Spires, (t17510116-52).

experiencing ‘could not be occasioned by a complaint of the bowels’. The mistress’s sexual knowledge, occasioned by her own feminine realm of experience, offered an insight into her servant’s body. Unlike the early modern cases examined by Laura Gowing, or the extraordinary case of Mary Toft examined by Karen Harvey, on these occasions, total control was not assumed over the body of the female servant.⁵¹⁰ Random was convinced not only not to touch the body of her servant maid, but also to quit the room in which she lay by her insistent claims that she was not in labour and ‘was as ever she was in her life’. Random returned the next morning with milk and water for the maid, and it was only when she observed that the ‘bed was tumbled very much’ and that the servant’s hand was bloody, that she concluded that the girl had either miscarried or delivered a baby herself over night. If, until this point, Random has generally assented to the demands of her servant to leave the room, she now regained control over the space. The birth of an illegitimate child not only risked the reputation of the household, and usually ended the place, but claims for poor relief or even criminal prosecution signalled the failure of domestic order. The mistress informed her servant that she ‘would not leave’ until she revealed where the baby lay. Although Jarvis begged her mistress to go downstairs to breakfast, and attempted to stand in her mistress’s way as she approached the side of her bedstead, Random discovered the body of the child in the corner of the room. On the discovery of the child’s body, the meaning of the space was transformed. No longer was Jarvis’s room a place of retreat, comfort and recuperation over which she had a semblance of control, the room had become a crime scene over which the mistress was ultimately responsible. As a broker between that space and the rest of the household, Random, ‘ran to the door’ and screamed for help.

Conclusions:

By the end of the eighteenth century, it was expected that servants would sleep in rooms separate from their master. In contrast to anachronistic accounts of this separation purely in terms of a desire for ‘privacy’ on the part of the master and/or mistress, this chapter has suggested a number of other – more practical- concerns. The desire to distance maid servant from master appears particularly acutely in the sources, and appears to have been related to an increasing association with the beds

⁵¹⁰ Gowing, *Common Bodies*; K. Harvey, ‘What Mary Toft Felt: Women’s Voices, Pain, Power and the Body’, *HWJ*, Issue 80, (2015), pp. 33-51.

in which maid servants slept with the body of its occupant. This was partly about an anxiety and awareness about the sexual vulnerabilities of servant maids, but was also related to a more general understanding about appropriate boundaries between household members. The manner in which mistresses continued to bed down with their maid servants questions the extent to which the re-arrangement of sleeping arrangements was a response to distance according to social status, but also the assumed desirability of sleeping alone. The association of sleep with the body meant that gender was an important determinant of domestic arrangements; for both maids and their mistresses bedfellows acted as a guarantee of sexual honesty rather than simply an intrusion in their 'private' space. The gender of the servant also had implications for the location of their slumber; although apprentices, shopmen and other male servants continued to bed-down in warehouses and shops, servant maids were increasingly relocated to separate 'bed' rooms upstairs. If accounts of this space have so far focused on the lowly status of this space, and on the role it played in the marking out of the subordinate place of servants within the household family, this chapter has suggested that they also be understood in the context of servants' life histories. The gendered furnishing of these spaces suggests not only that the domestic space was a way through which young men and women came to understand, experience and perform their own gendered identities, but also reveals that the relationship of male and female servants to the space of the house varied enormously. Female servants appear to have been more reliant on the security offered by a period in 'place'. They were provided with chests of drawers, mirrors and other props of domestic womanhood. The provision of a bed was an important part of the service agreement, and both servants and their masters and mistresses recognised an informal sense of ownership over their beds and the rooms in which they stood. The act of sleep, of undressing and dressing, and the storage of material goods in their possession served to 'appropriate' these rooms to them. Although assumed to be accessible spaces, evidence from the *Proceedings* suggests this was not the case. Servants were frequently able to lock their doors against intrusion, and evidence from Northcote's print series suggests that contemporaries were acutely anxious about the possibilities for withdrawal provided by them. Although these spaces have typically been seen to embody servants' lack of power, they offered an important means through which servants made 'shift' and through which their

identities were made material within the households in which they lived and laboured.

Chapter Three: The Servant's Box



Fig 14. William Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress, Plate 1*, (London, 1732), etching, engraving, BM.

Although the world of service is typically limited to the household of the master and mistress, this chapter, which focuses on the boxes belonging to servants, takes us well beyond its doors. The first plate of William Hogarth's *A Harlot's Progress* depicted Moll Hackabout as she disembarked the York wagon at Cheapside (fig. 14). Moll stepped from the coach with a large leather trunk, a corded wooden box, a basket addressed to a 'loving cosen', and a bundle tied to her arm with a handkerchief. Although Moll's arrival in London was part of the artist's moral message, and indicated the corrupting potential of the capital, Hogarth depicted a material world that would have been familiar to contemporaries. For most servants arriving in London, or travelling between places, their possessions were stored in wooden boxes, bundles and pockets, as well as the larger box or trunk that Amanda Vickery has suggested became a 'symbol' of service in the eighteenth century.⁵¹¹ On

⁵¹¹ Vickery, 'Englishman's Home', p. 166. For examples of servants with multiple boxes see *OBP*, September 1754, trial of Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Prichard, (t17540911-30); *OBP*, October 1757,

arrival in place, these boxes were integrated into the domestic space and formed an important part of servants' material lives within it. But what are we to make of these boxes? What can these items tell us about servants' lives in the eighteenth century, and how might they add to our understanding of servants' experiences of, and relationships to, the domestic spaces in which they lived and laboured?

Servants' boxes emerge from court records, contemporary prints, literature, and scarce references in manuscript sources as important spaces of material security and economic independence for servants. Through a focus on these boxes, this chapter suggests that servants can be integrated into the mobile material worlds of the labouring population. These boxes offer evidence of the ways in which servants managed and maintained their material belongings whilst in place, reveal important functions and meanings of the domestic space for servants, and suggest it functioned as a site through which servants made shift. Like the kitchen and the garret, the box was a contested space; it concealed a discrete material world from masters and mistresses, and registered the servant's outsider status within the household. As such, servants' boxes reiterate the ways in which the domestic space was constituted of multiple (and often overlapping) spheres of ownership and belonging. A potent symbol of servants' mobility, boxes made material the potential of the servant's flight from the domestic space whilst the accumulation of goods simultaneously weighed them down, and made them more dependent on the security of the households in which they lived and laboured.

Although extant boxes are difficult to trace, servants' boxes appear frequently in the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey*. The first part of the chapter is based on a keyword search for records which included the word 'servant' and the phrase 'my box' in the period between 1750 and 1800. Of the 231 records which were retrieved by this search, 41 detail the theft of a box or boxes belonging to a servant and/or its contents. It is this sample that offers evidence of the box and its contents unencumbered by narratives of servant criminality, and is the focus of the following discussion on the material constitution of these items.⁵¹² A broader search for the term 'servant' and 'box' revealed a different kind of case which typically made reference to the search

trial of Eleanor Moore (t17571026-31); *OBP*, July 1784, trial of Isabella Vere (t17840707-76); *OBP*, May 1793, trial of Elizabeth Williams, Edward Stack, Mary Stack, (t17930529-85); *OBP*, May 1795, trial of Ann Batt, Ann Bryant, (t17950520-36).

⁵¹² See appendix 4a.

of servants' boxes by those who suspected them of theft. These records add to the discussions about domestic boundaries in the previous chapter, and are explored as evidence of the negotiation between servant and master and/or mistress later on.

'A deal trunk, covered with flowered paper.'

Although the material lives of servants have been a subject of much discussion, this chapter and the next, attempt to move 'beyond' consumption and think about the function of material goods in practice. First, though, it is necessary to understanding something of the material constitution of these items. Servants' boxes are described at court as boxes, trunks or 'caravans' and as constructed from cheap 'wood', 'deal' or 'wainscot', and occasionally from leather or 'hair'.⁵¹³ The cheapest of the boxes to have been stolen from servants were identified only as 'wooden' or 'deal' and were comparable in value to the boxes used by grocers and other trades people to shift goods around the capital. The more valuable boxes and trunks were equivalent in cost to those used by householders and more affluent members of society. From the small number of cases in which the value of box and its contents was included in the sample, the value of the box appears comparable to that of the goods inside, and investment in a substantial box or trunk appears to have depended on the value of the goods stored within. When Mary Savage, who was a servant to a doctor in Golden Square, lost her box as it arrived on the York coach in 1795, it was valued by the court at four shillings- one of the most valuable boxes to appear in the sample.⁵¹⁴ The contents of the box (of which more later) was calculated at an enormous eleven pounds, nine shillings and two pence - the equivalent of over two year's wages for most servants in the capital.⁵¹⁵ By way of a comparison, the box of Elizabeth Harvey who left her box at the Register Office when she arrived in London for a place in 1799, was valued at six pence, its contents at two pounds eight shillings.⁵¹⁶ The material containers depicted by Hogarth are likely to have reflected the upper end of

⁵¹³ For 'caravan' see *OBP*, October 1782, trial of William Hastings, (t17821016-46). For 'wooden' see *OBP*, February 1756, trial of Richard Harvey, (t17560225-8); *OBP*, July 1795, trial of John Toplis, (t17950701-70); *OBP*, December 1799, trial of William Clarke, (t17991204-41). For 'deal' see *OBP*, June 1772, trial of Nathaniel Cain, Elizabeth Spur, Jeremiah Wells, (t17720603-11); *OBP*, December 1783, trial of Charles Biggs, (t17831210-53); *OBP*, September 1785, trial of Thomas Lewington, (t17850914-114). For 'hair' see *OBP*, July 1774, trial of Thomas Fetherston, (t17740706-44). On relative cost of materials in the eighteenth century see C. Edwards, *Eighteenth-Century Furniture*, (Manchester, 1996).

⁵¹⁴ *OBP*, July 1795, trial of John Toplis, (t17950701-70).

⁵¹⁵ On wages see footnote 95.

⁵¹⁶ *OBP*, December 1799, trial of William Clarke, (t17991204-41).

that available to servants. The modest but respectable background of Hogarth's protagonist furthered his moral message, and made her fall from grace later in the series all the more spectacular. The embroidery scissors and 'huswife' around Moll's waist testified to her education in needlework, her fashionable clothes and substantial trunk to her material security. It was in contrast to this scene of material security that the material and moral depravity of the later prints was graphically illustrated. If servants' storage possibilities fell somewhere between that of Mary Savage and Elizabeth Harvey, Moll was closer to the former.

But where did these boxes come from? It might have been the case that servants purchased or inherited a trunk or box prior to their first place. When servants left their parental homes, the packing of the box may have symbolised the separation of the individual from their family whilst reinforcing the ties of assistance indicated by it. A much later oral history of service suggests how, with parental assistance, a box was transformed from a functional item into an emotive reminder of parental affection and duty. The participant, who was asked about her experience of service in the nineteenth century claimed 'we got a wooden box from our grocer, one which my father put hinges and a fastener and my mother papered it inside and out with wallpaper'.⁵¹⁷ The acquisition of a box marked an important moment in the life cycle. Amanda Vickery has demonstrated the ways in which the provision of personal storage was an important rite of passage, particularly for young girls.⁵¹⁸ The difference between the child 'playing' at storage, and the containers of adulthood may have been constructed through the item itself, perhaps through size and material decoration, but also through a distinction in the contents and in patterns of use. Life-cycle stages, responsibilities and roles were marked, transformed and performed through material culture and its storage, and the box played an important part in this.

More affluent servants or their families might have been able to purchase a box or trunk from a local upholsterer or trunk maker. An extant trunk in the Geffrye's collection resembles that depicted in Hogarth's print (figs 15 and 16), and was made by a London trunk maker whose draft trade card advertised 'all sorts of sea-chests', 'campaign' trunks and cases for guns, and suggested that 'Gentlemen, Merchants &

⁵¹⁷ Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism*, p. 104.

⁵¹⁸ Vickery, 'Englishman's Home', 170.



Fig. 15. Trunk made from wood covered in sealskin or horsehair made in the United Kingdom, c. 1740-1800, GM, T126.



Fig. 16. Interior of trunk lined with printed paper, GM, T126.

others may be supplied with Packing Trunks of all sorts'.⁵¹⁹ If the trunk that survives in the Geffrye's collection was part of this overtly masculine material world, exactly

⁵¹⁹ Draft Trade Card for William Robertson, trunk maker, Heal Collection, 120.67-70 and D, 2.4022, BM; Trade Card for William Robertson, trunk and plate maker, 2006, U.739, BM.

what it was that made it so remains unclear.⁵²⁰ On a practical level, a new hair trunk like this was probably beyond the means of most servants, both male and female. A trunk stolen from outside the shop of a trunk maker in Long Acre in 1800, for example, was valued by the court at twenty one shillings, far greater than the most expensive box to appear in the sample, and a substantial proportion of the annual wages of most servants.⁵²¹ There was, however, a buoyant second-hand trade in boxes for servants which might have made these items more accessible; one pawnbroker claimed that he bought a deal box valued at one shilling and six pence from a servant who ‘had left her place, and did not want it’.⁵²² The makeshift construction of these boxes suggested in the oral history from the nineteenth century was also evident in the eighteenth: one mistress appeared at court and described the box belonging to her servant as ‘made out of some tea chests, covered with paper’.⁵²³ Although this servant and her mistress bought this box whilst the servant was in place, other servants constructed their own boxes from other box-like containers. Hat boxes, for example, were often used by servants to transport and store their goods. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, manufacturers were beginning to be aware of a specific- servant market for their goods. An advertisement for a trunk maker which appeared in a Sunday newspaper in 1802, for example, listed an ‘entire fresh Stock of new-invented solid Leather and Hair Travelling Trunks’, but added: ‘N.B. For Servants, *inferior strong* Trunks with *good Locks*, *exceeding low-Chests*, Packing Cases, Boxes &c, made at the shortest notice’.⁵²⁴ That this servant-specific marketing strategy was rare in the eighteenth century suggests that the boxes belonging to servants might be indistinguishable from those owned by other individuals, and that servants were integrated into a much larger cohort of mobile people. The advertisement is, however, significant; it suggests not only that servants’ boxes were generally ‘inferior’ in quality (and presumably in price), but that strength, security, ‘good locks’ and speedy delivery were key attributes of it.

The reference to ‘good locks’ is particularly significant. The breaking open of the box and the policing of its boundaries will be addressed later on, but it is clear that

⁵²⁰ On the difference between the ‘solid’ masculine furniture and the ‘dainty’ feminine see Vickery, ‘Fashioning Difference’ p. 342.

⁵²¹ *OBP*, September 1800, trial of William Murphy, (t18000917-98).

⁵²² *OBP*, January 1799, trial of Mary Hall, (t17990109-24).

⁵²³ *OBP*, May 1795, trial of Ann Batt, Ann Bryant, (t17950520-36).

⁵²⁴ *E. Johnson’s British Gazette and Sunday Monitor*, (London, Sunday July 4th, 1802), Issue 1183.

the majority of these boxes were, like the ones advertised above, lockable. In the sample of 41 cases in which a box was stolen from a servant, the locking of the box appears to have been routine. Of 18 examples from the sample which indicate whether or not the box was locked, only four were unlocked. As with the locking of the garret door, the decision to leave a box unlocked probably related to decisions about whether to lock the box as much as the physical possibility of locking. Sometimes this appears to have been a matter of domestic priorities. Mary Duffey, who was a servant at a house on Leicester Square, for example, prioritised her mistress's business over the locking of her box. She told the court that she was interrupted by her mistress before she had a chance to lock it. She stated she was: 'at my box, when my mistress called me up stairs; I went up stairs, and left my box open'.⁵²⁵ At other times, boxes were left open because of assessments about the relative security of the goods within. Although Sarah Saunders claimed to have left her box open because she had 'misaid' her key, she had lived with her master on Newtoner's Lane near Holborn for five years and it is arguable that she felt secure enough to leave it unattended.⁵²⁶ Perceptions of security were clearly related to the context in which the box was left. Mary Lee, another servant who left her box unlocked, had also been in place for a long time, but also told the court that although her box was not locked, the door to her room was.⁵²⁷ Where the box was in motion between places, there was a greater imperative to secure the box against intrusion. The lid of Mary Page's box was 'screwed down with two screws' as she walked through Smithfield with her master's son.⁵²⁸ Similarly, Eleanor Trotter nailed her box shut before she left it her lodging whilst she was out of place.⁵²⁹ When the box was not lockable, servants improvised with the material available to provide them with the psychological reassurance and deterrent effect of the locked box. When Catherine Jones' master, a grocer in St John Street, was declared bankrupt and a public sale was ordered of his goods, she 'corded up my box in the garret ready to take away when I should be discharged'.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁵ *OBP*, September 1800, trial of Thomas Scott, (t18000917-104).

⁵²⁶ *OBP*, September 1790, trial of Elizabeth Ford, (t17900915-49).

⁵²⁷ *OBP*, February 1783, trial of Daniel Bailey, (t17830226-49).

⁵²⁸ *OBP*, April 1791, trial of Jeremiah Bowers, (t17910413-2).

⁵²⁹ *OBP*, April 1760, trial of Abigail Littler, (t17600416-14).

⁵³⁰ *OBP*, July 1778, trial of William Daniels, (t17780715-37).

Like other material goods, these boxes offered a degree of personal expression and allowed for the performance of material taste. Extant boxes in the Geffrye's collection and elsewhere reveal that both the inside and outside could be decorated.⁵³¹ The insides of boxes are often lined with wallpaper and pages from books and newspapers. The trunk in the Geffrye's collection, for example, is lined with pages of a dictionary with a floral pattern block-printed on top (fig.16). The lining of a box was undoubtedly a practical necessity to protect the goods inside from damage, but also offered an opportunity for personal expression. It might have been that this was where the gender of the box's owner received material configuration. Lucy Stockford, who arrived in London on the 30th April 1795 to find a place, described her box as 'a deal trunk, covered with flowered paper' and the box of Ann Batt, who served in the house of a shopkeeper on Rosemary Lane, was described by her mistress as covered with 'figured paper'.⁵³² If this decoration occurred before purchase it might be understood to suggest the consumer choices explored by John Styles and Chloe Wigston-Smith.⁵³³ There was also clearly an attempt to personalise and customise these items *after* they had been purchased. The inscription of the name of the individual to the outside of the box is the most obvious example of this, and aided the personal connection between servant and storage container. The trunk depicted by Hogarth was marked with Moll's initials, and evidence from the *Proceedings* suggests that this was not simply a pictorial device. When Rachael Blackburn's box was stolen from an errand cart as she moved places from Cheapside to Islington in 1785 she stated 'I am sure the things were in the box, I helped to carry it; there is my name on the box, in my own hand-writing'.⁵³⁴ Likewise, Mary Richard, who accompanied her master from Stapleton to his town house in Sloan Street, recognised the trunk taken from the back of the chaise with the statement that 'I knew it to be my trunk, there was my name on the box'.⁵³⁵ The initialising and decorating of the box was clearly a practical imperative given its role in transporting servants' belongings, but also suggests a sense of ownership and individual identification with the box and the contents.

⁵³¹ See, for example, trunk c. 1760, 94.168, Museum Of London.

⁵³² *OBP*, May 1795, trial of Alice Burroughs, Amelia Evans (t17950520-34); *OBP*, May 1795, trial of Ann Batt, Ann Bryant (t17950520-36).

⁵³³ As above, pp. 50-51.

⁵³⁴ *OBP*, September 1785, trial of Thomas Lewington, (t17850914-114).

⁵³⁵ *OBP*, December 1792, trial of Joseph Hoare (t17921215-10).

Packing up

One of the defining characteristics of servants' boxes was that they allowed servants' possessions to be gathered together and moved from place to place. Boxes were packed onto the backs of coaches and errand carts, hoisted onto the shoulders of biddable friends, acquaintances, footmen and porters, and carried aloft the metropolitan streets tucked under the arm or balanced atop the heads of their owners.⁵³⁶ The box suggests the dislocation, migration and periodic movement between places that was characteristic of service.⁵³⁷ Where the box appeared in contemporary prints, it tended to symbolise this movement. In Hogarth's image, the box symbolised the maid's arrival in London (fig. 14). A later print after the series, published in 1780, similarly associated the box with arrival in the city – although the box in this print was small enough to be tied to the servant's arm (fig. 17). The box in a print after the French artist Étienne Jeurat, which was published in London in the middle of the century, suggested the opposite trajectory; the servant's departure from the domestic space of her master and mistress was symbolised by the reprimand of her mistress and the wages laid out on the table and by the box tucked under the servant's arm and the larger one at her feet (fig. 18). Likewise, the small box which was tied to the maid's arm in the fifth plate of Northcote's *Diligence and Dissipation* indicated her banishment from the house (fig. 19). It is well known that servants were a highly mobile population, and constituted a significant percentage of those migrating to London each year. The box adds a material and personal dimension to the important but impersonal statistics on migration gathered by Wrigley et al.⁵³⁸ The packing, unpacking, and storage of the box allows us to think-through the reasons why a young person might journey to London, and what they were hoping to establish in place. The continued presence of

⁵³⁶ Ann Goldwell 'drag'd' her box from her room to have it taken away, *OBP*, September 1757, trial of Ann Goldwell, (t17570914-33). Mary Sherman's left her box at her place after she had been discharged because she thought it 'would be too cumbersome to carry', *OBP*, February 1762, trial of Mary Sherman, (t17620224-4). For boxes being carried on the tops of heads see *OBP*, July 1740, trial of Elizabeth Davis, (t17400709-4). For coaches, errand carts, and carriages see: *OBP*, June 1772, trial of Isaac Holmes, James Fox, Elizabeth Turner, Thomas Willcox, (t17720603-1), *OBP*, September 1785, trial of Thomas Lewington, (t17850914-114), *OBP*, December 1799, trial of William Clarke, (t17991204-41), *OBP*, July 1795, trial of John Toplis, (t17950701-70). For the exchange see *OBP*, August 1786, trial of Thomas Harwood, (t17860830-85).

⁵³⁷ On this see Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism*, p. 104. On material culture and migration see D.J. Parkin, 'Mementoes as Transitional Objects in Human Displacement', *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol. 4. No. 3, (1999), pp. 303-320, and Special Issue 'Migrant Worlds, Material Cultures', *Mobilities*, Vol. 3, Issue 3, (2008).

⁵³⁸ E. A. Wrigley, R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871*, (Cambridge, 1989).



Fig. 17. Detail of *The Modern Harlot's Progress, or adventures of Harriet Heedless, Plate I, Harriet Heedless, applying to a statute hall for a place*, (London, 1780), hand-coloured etching, BM.



Fig. 19. Detail of Thomas Hellyer (after James Northcote), *Diligence and Dissipation, Plate 5, The Wanton turn'd out of Doors for Misconduct*, (London, 1797), stipple, etching, BM.



Fig. 18. Richard Houston (after Étienne Jeaurat), *The Servant Discharg'd*, (London, 1749-1777), mezzotint, BM.

the box whilst a servant was in place also suggests the vulnerability of servants to eviction from the house of their master and mistress, the uncertainty of their place, and the transitory nature of their residence.

The boxes that appear in these records testify to the presence of servants within London's landscape, and make material their place within it. If the majority of boxes were stolen from the households in which servants lived and worked, boxes were also stolen as servants arrived in the capital or journeyed between places. The negotiations of young country girls with the metropolis are revealed through cases where these boxes were targeted by thieves; the parochial backgrounds of their owners apparently made evident by the box they carried with them as well as and their mishandling of a whole host of metropolitan situations. Either dangerously naive or comically wary of the city they had heard so much about, the country maid was an easy target and a figure of fun. The manuscript *Letters from a Servant Maid to her Family in Hampshire* detail the journey of a young girl who arrived in London for a place in the summer of 1743.⁵³⁹ These letters, ostensibly between a servant maid and her family in the country, were probably authored by a member of the employing class, but reveal important assumptions about the box nonetheless.⁵⁴⁰ Written as a condescending exposé of servant naivety, the letters also suggest the cultural distance that could be indicated by the presence of the box. The author mocked the inexperience of the young maid; the letters portray her perplexity at a whole host of metropolitan situations, and serve to confirm the cultural superiority of the author and reader, and the difference between servant and master. The sense of cultural distance is compounded with the coach's arrival in Piccadilly (which the girl tells her sister 'is a street as long as all Winchester together'), and the maid's ignorance of the metropolitan mechanisms through which material items were transported. The servant writes to her sister:

⁵³⁹ Letters from a Maid Servant Lately Come to Town To Her Relations in Hamshire, GEN MSS File 134, Beinecke Library.

⁵⁴⁰ The epistolary format of the manuscript mirrors that of Richardson's *Pamela*, published only a few years before. The letter-series ends with a neatly didactic discovery by the maid servant. The last letter recalled that she had discovered a paper hidden in her master's pocket, that the paper was written by her master, and ends, 'A good servant shou'd mind her Duty: & shou'd mind nothing farther. She shou'd never be desirous of prying into Secrets, nor ever take any Letter, or Paper's out of her Master's pocket'. The script too, written in a neatly joined hand, suggests this was not authored by a bonefide servant. On the fashion for literary 'Mollspeak' in the eighteenth century see Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p. 280.

As soon as ever I got out of the wagon, & had shook my Pettycoats into some order again; I ask'd the Waggoner for my box; & he, like a Rascal as he is, said he would not let me have it. He told me, I must send for it to the place where he put up, somewhere by Fleet –ditch for he had not time to look out people's trunks & things there. I said, I would have my box: & he swore a large Oath, that I shou'd not.⁵⁴¹

As the wagon rolled out of sight, the maid was resolved to her downfall. As she arrived at her place without her box, her master's response reiterated his benevolent metropolitanism, and the maid's ignorance. The maid recalled:

When I got to the house, Master ask'd me, what was the matter with me: & upon my telling him how I have been sarv'd, he smil'd, & said twas all safe: & that he wou'd take care, that I shou'd have my box again: & so Godbe thanked, the very next day.

The wry smile of the master recalls the amusement that Carolyn Steedman has suggested was felt by many employers when confronted with the ignorance of their country servants.⁵⁴²

The box also draws attention to the alternative networks to which servants could turn for shelter and to watch over their material possessions. For those servants who were born and raised in London and its environs, the households of siblings or other kin offered an alternative place of refuge and security for servants and their belongings. Although servants' families might not have been able to support them, they could offer a space to keep a box secure whilst the servant was between places. The sample suggests that servants might leave a box of goods at the households of family members, to which they would return to restock and store items. Hannah Taylor, for example, who served in a house in Russell Street in Covent Garden, left a variety of clothing in her box at her brother's house in Duke Street, St James's Square.⁵⁴³ Peter Weskett, a servant to a squire, also left a box at his brother's place at the Crown public house on Eagle Street in Bloomsbury.⁵⁴⁴ Depending on the distance of familial households, and the extent of the security offered by them, servants might also rely on the households of past masters and mistresses in which to store their boxes and personal possessions. The *Proceedings* reveal that it was not uncommon for servant

⁵⁴¹ Letters from a Maid Servant, pp. 31-32.

⁵⁴² Steedman, *Labours Lost*, esp. pp. 5 -8.

⁵⁴³ *OBP*, January 1762, trial of Hannah, wife of John Shelton, (t17620114-22). For servants leaving a box with sisters see *OBP*, April 1797, trial of Elizabeth Bennett, (t17970426-43); *OBP*, October 1790, trial of Mary Harrison, (t17901027-40).

⁵⁴⁴ *OBP*, April 1766, trial of John Haggist, (t17660409-5).

to leave a box in the care of a household from which they had been discharged. Eleanor Trotter, for example, was out of place when a pair of white stockings, a pair of ruffles, a linen handkerchief, and a stomacher were taken out of the box she had left in the house in Mayfair where she had served.⁵⁴⁵ Likewise, Thomas Richards left a box in the garret at his place on St James's Street after he was discharged and, according to the court, 'frequently returned there, under pretence of looking into his box', to which 'no objection was ever made'.⁵⁴⁶ The presence of the boxes belonging to servants offered a guarantee of sorts. Not only can the presence of a box or two be understood as a gesture of the integration of servants within the household, but it also offered a guarantee of a more material kind; the box and its contents became a bargaining tool through which masters and mistresses could compel obedience, as well as a ready stash of goods through which to compensate for loss for which servants were suspected.⁵⁴⁷

The households of past masters and kin not only provided security for the goods inside, but meant that the box became integrated into the extended network of surveillance and protection offered by the domestic space. Something of the mechanisms at work to protect servants' goods when those boundaries were breached is suggested by a case that appeared before the court in May 1790. Mary Stevens was a servant to the shopkeeper Charles Dixon who lived on Charterhouse Street near Smithfield Market when her box was stolen from the house. She told the court she: 'left the casement of the garret fastened with an iron catch...I went up a little after nine... it was quite dark; I observed the window open, and the trunk gone, which was the side of the window in the garret'.⁵⁴⁸ Stevens informed her master as he was shutting up the shop below, and he quickly activated an extended network of shopkeepers, tradesmen and women to help locate Stevens' property. Suspecting that the trunk had been taken into an empty house adjacent to the house on Charterhouse Street, Dixon sent Stevens to the butcher's over the road to get help to search the abandoned property. Dixon meanwhile informed a woman who sold 'greens' to 'give an eye to the door of the empty house'. Although it was Dixon who 'collared'

⁵⁴⁵ *OBP*, April 1760, trial of Abigail Littler, (t17880910-72). Also see *OBP*, September 1788, trial of Martha Burgess, (t17880910-72).

⁵⁴⁶ *OBP*, April 1783, trial of Thomas Richards, (t17830430-42).

⁵⁴⁷ See for example, *OBP*, December 1766, trial of Robert Downing, (t17661217-31). On the withholding of the servant's belonging as a bargaining tool see Vickery, 'World of Goods', p. 284.

⁵⁴⁸ *OBP*, May 1790, trial of William Vale, Samuel Thurley, (t17900526-60).

the prisoner who escaped from it, two neighbours took chase after him, and another two helped to search the house and to return the trunk to its rightful owner.

For servants without recourse to this alternative network of material security, the box entered into more formal market relationships. When servants were not ‘live in’ servants, the security of independent lodging rooms was a concern – particularly when boxes were stored in shared rooms. Robert Durant, a groom to Sir John Dyer in St. James’s Street, lost a variety of goods from his box in the room that he shared with a postilion and another man at a nearby lodging house.⁵⁴⁹ Durant’s long absences from the house whilst serving his master would have been common for servants living away from the place in which they served. Mary Harrison, a servant at the Sun Tavern in Foster Lane Cheapside, also fell victim to theft from her box which sat in a nearby lodging room; the theft was particularly galling for Harrison as the accused had been her fellow servant, to whom she had recommended the lodging as she had been ‘very much distressed, being turned away at a minute’s warning’.⁵⁵⁰ If the security of the box depended on the trustworthiness of bedfellows and networks of community surveillance, secure domestic spaces were at a premium. The importance of a secure domestic space in which to store a box is suggested by the fact that servants might pay into a benefit club which promised to secure their boxes for them – although more research would be needed to ascertain how exactly these schemes worked. When Sarah Chapman lost a variety of her clothing from a room occupied by another household member, she explained ‘I have three benefit clubs, and I am obliged to keep their boxes in my room for safety, and it will hold no more’.⁵⁵¹ The informal storage of the box by family and friends indicates the alternative networks of belonging that operated within the capital; paid options suggest other mechanisms of material security to which servants had access.

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The box was not only a container of goods, but was itself an important material object. The box might have offered a degree of material continuity between places; the paper pasted on by a servant’s mother in the country, the initials carved whilst waiting for the wagon, or the instructions written on the side of the box might have

⁵⁴⁹ *OBP*, April 1786, trial of Thomas Hobbs, Henry Giles, (t17860426-3).

⁵⁵⁰ *OBP*, September 1791, trial of Sarah Cahall, (t17910914-33).

⁵⁵¹ *OBP*, January 1783, trial of Sarah Jewson, (t17830115-60).

functioned as a reminder of the narrative of the servant's life so often dictated by the whims of their master and mistress. Once in place, the box acted as an item of domestic furniture. Servants' boxes were generally kept in the room in which they slept, typically by the side or at the foot of their bed.⁵⁵² The familiar 'creaking' of the lid of the box was testified to by one servant; another told the court that she 'heard the box lid flap down'.⁵⁵³ Contemporary illustrations suggest that boxes could fulfil various different functions within garret rooms, and act as makeshift tables and stools, as well as a place to store goods.⁵⁵⁴ Although, as the last chapter suggested, female servants might be provided with items of storage furniture, the box appears to have operated alongside these more substantial pieces. The significance of storage furniture (long the preserve only of furniture historians) has recently been noted by a number of scholars. For Margaret Ponsonby and David Hussey, eighteenth-century storage offered the opportunity for individual development and identity formation, particularly for the 'single homemakers' explored by them. Personal storage, they suggested, was a 'key element that secured, however tenuously, an element of self determination' in the 'compromised spaces' that many individual inhabited.⁵⁵⁵ If the storage container was partly about ensuring the material security of goods and the promise for the future offered by them, they also inspired particular material practices. Mimi Hellman, Glen Adamson, Kate Smith and others have recently demonstrated that eighteenth-century furniture demanded postures and performances of use that shaped social action and identities.⁵⁵⁶ Although the focus of this type of study is typically on luxury decoration, porcelain teacups, footstools and

⁵⁵² For examples of boxes stolen from the rooms in which servants slept see *OBP*, January 1764, trial of James Nokes, William Brown, Jane Chamberlayne, (t17640113-42); *OBP*, October 1764, trial of Edward Ellis, (t17641017-11); *OBP*, July 1774, trial of Thomas Featherston, (t17740706-44); *OBP*, July 1778, trial of William Daniels, (t17780715-37); *OBP*, September 1782, trial of William Bland, John Williams (t17810912-4); *OBP*, January 1782, trial of Jane Dobey, (t17820109-1); *OBP*, February 1783, trial of Daniel Bailey, (t17830226-49); *OBP*, April 1795, trial of Jane Wheeler, (t17950416-78); *OBP*, April 1795, trial of Thomas Fox (t17950416-4); *OBP*, May 1795, trial of Sarah Jones, (t17950520-35). For examples of the box being kept near the bed, see *OBP*, October 1764, trial of Edward Ellis, (t17641017-11); *OBP*, June 1789, trial of John Hall, (t17890603-54); *OBP*, April 1795, trial of Thomas Fox (t17950416-4).

⁵⁵³ *OBP*, August 1725, trial of Thomas Woldridge (t17250827-43), *OBP*, July 1778, trial of William Daniels, (t17780715-37).

⁵⁵⁴ See, for example, *The Methodist Taylor Caught in Adultery*, etching, engraving, (1768), Yale Center for British Art.

⁵⁵⁵ Ponsonby and Hussey, *Single Homemaker*, p. 98.

⁵⁵⁶ M. Hellman, 'Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century France', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4, (1999), pp. 415-445. K. Smith, 'In Her Hands: Materializing Distinction in Georgian Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 11, No. 4, (2014), pp. 489-506; Adamson, 'The Case of the Missing Footstool', pp. 201-203.

embroidered sofas, the same is true of more everyday objects.⁵⁵⁷ The difference between servants' boxes and other items of storage here becomes significant. Unlike the chests of drawers, cabinets and presses in which householder's goods were stored, servants' boxes demanded an entirely different corporeal performance. Generally kept on the floor, with a top-opening lid, packing, and unpacking the box required the servant to either bend over or kneel on the floor and lean into the box. The indecorous posture of access to the box is made clear in plate five of Hogarth's *A Harlot's Progress* where, as Moll lays dying of syphilis, her box is ransacked by the landlady of the house (fig. 20).⁵⁵⁸



Fig. 20. Detail of William Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress*, Plate 5, (London, 1732), etching, engraving, Royal Collection, © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

The eighteenth century was an important one in the history of storage; chests and cabinets which had proliferated in the seventeenth century were joined by smaller items of furniture which 'provided facilities for classifying...and ordering

⁵⁵⁷ Hamling and Richardson, *Everyday Objects*.

⁵⁵⁸ See Vickery, 'Englishman's Home', p. 166.

possessions in almost any room in a house'.⁵⁵⁹ In this literature, the history of consumption is brought together with enlightenment ideas about the classification and ordering of goods. Despite the difference in material circumstances, and the construction and performances demanded by the box itself, the box allowed servants to participate in the acquisition, storage and ordering of objects that have come to define the eighteenth century –albeit on a smaller scale. How servants stored and organised their boxes depended on their material resources as much as their own character and behavioural practices. When Sarah Prosser's master suspected her of theft and requested to search her box he described her box as 'open, and her caps and ruffles thrown about'.⁵⁶⁰ The box of Dorothy Foulkes, on the other hand, appears to have been more orderly. Foulkes was particularly careful that the money she kept in her box was not loose but 'sewed up in a piece of new leather, and put into a linen purse, and sewed in, and that was put down in a nook of the box'.⁵⁶¹ Sarah Bird who lived servant with the attorney William Bryan and his family in George-Street Westminster also constructed an internal storage system within her box through a series of false bottoms. Her master told the court that 'there were several sheets of paper...at the bottom of the box, white fools cap paper, and letter paper' that he found 'gave way' to another layer, a 'parchment deed, which she had pushed down, round against the sides of the box'.⁵⁶² The relative poverty of these women is suggested by the makeshift ways in which they sought to organise these spaces. Mary Kelly, servant to Thomas Cartwright who lived on Bishopsgate Street in 1749, for example, 'wrapp'd up' a 36 shilling piece, a guinea, a half guinea and seven shillings that she had stolen from her master in a pair of 'old stockings' and a 'dirty' 'housewife' which she kept in her box.⁵⁶³ Although some of these examples suggest the desire to conceal illicitly acquired goods from prying masters and mistresses, the urge to separate items within the box was probably more of a commonplace – and practical – occurrence. For ease of finding (particularly in the dark), it was probably necessary to create smaller compartments within capacious boxes.

⁵⁵⁹ C. Sargentson, 'Looking at Furniture Inside Out: Strategies of Secrecy and Security in Eighteenth-Century French Furniture', in D. Goodman and K. Norberg (eds), *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century: What Furniture Can Tell Us about the European and American Past*, (Abingden, 2007), p. 205. On storage also see Hussey and Ponsonby, *Single Homemaker*, pp. 90- 105; Overton et al, *Production and Consumption*, pp. 90-93.

⁵⁶⁰ *OBP*, February 1754, trial of Sarah Prosser, (t17540227-24).

⁵⁶¹ *OBP*, February 1768, trial of Anne Robinson, otherwise Anne Cole Sophia Revell, (t17680224-65).

⁵⁶² *OBP*, July 1794, trial of Sarah Bird (t17940716-59).

⁵⁶³ *OBP*, October 1749, trial of Mary Kelly (t17491011-1).

‘All the Fruits of her Labours and Industry’

What it was that servants kept in their boxes, and the manner in which these items were understood, is also suggested in the *Proceedings*. Maurice (or Morris) Salisbury was just nineteen when he was sentenced to death for returning from transportation on the 14th May 1752. The crime for which he received the original sentence was the theft of two gold rings and five and a half guineas from a maid’s box at a farmer’s house in Frampton near Dorchester where he was employed mending clothes. According to the account Salisbury gave to the Ordinary of Newgate prior to his execution, it was Tizzard, the man servant of the house, who encouraged him to commit the crime, and told him of the ease of its commission. ‘After some idle Chat’ Salisbury reported, Tizzard ‘told him, that he knew how he might get Money very easily... That the Maid’s Box stood in a certain Place, and pointed out the Room... that she saved up all her Money, and that besides she had other Things of Value, which she left always in that Box, which was without a Lock’. After two failed attempts at finding the box whilst the family was out, Salisbury eventually located it and slipped the maid’s rings and money into his pocket before returning again to his work ‘as if nothing had been the Matter, and no Mischief done’. Salisbury’s account of the discovery of his theft is significant, and suggests the function and use of the goods in servants’ boxes, at least in Dorchester. He told the Ordinary ‘by-and-by, when the poor Maid-Servant came to look into her Box, to her great Surprize, lo! All the Fruits of her Labours and Industry were gone, she knew not how’. The contents of the maid’s box was conceived by Salisbury as a material repository of the servant’s hard work, a stockpile of material value accrued over time; ‘the Fruits of her Labours and Industry’.⁵⁶⁴

The box’s contents were a vital part of the material economies through which servants made shift.⁵⁶⁵ The response of servants to the loss of their boxes suggests the importance of these goods. Mary King fell into ‘fits’ when her box was stolen from her when she arrived in London, and Mary Lever, a servant whose box was ransacked whilst she was out of place constructed this loss explicitly in terms of

⁵⁶⁴ *OBP*, April 1752, trial of Morris Salisbury (t17520408-52). *OBP*, May 1752, trial of Morris Salisbury, (t17520514-26), *OBP*, June 1752, Ordinary of Newgate’s Account, (OA17520601).

⁵⁶⁵ See footnote 217.

economic necessity. On discovering her box had been broken into, she exclaimed to her mistress ‘Oh! Dear me madam, I am robbed of all my cloaths... I must pledge my things to get money to maintain me’.⁵⁶⁶ The author of the letters from a servant maid appears to revel in the maid’s despair at the loss of her box; after the coach had driven off, the pretended maid told her sister:

I fell a crying: for there was my three new smocks in it, with the pretty Suckers; and my red Common-Prayer Book; & all of my cloathes; & every thing I was worth in the whole world. So I stood stock still, & cry’d...I am quite undone! What shall I do to shift me tomorrow? Or where shall I get any more cloaths?⁵⁶⁷

If the letter suggests something of the material attachment to her ‘three new smocks, with the pretty Suckers’ and her ‘red Common-Prayer Book’, it is the implications of the loss for her economic wellbeing that was the maid’s first priority. She lamented the loss of everything she was ‘worth in the whole world’ and claimed ‘I am quite undone! What shall I do to shift me tomorrow?’ The goods contained in servants’ boxes, were conceived as chattel; as stock that could realise its economic value whenever the need arose.

The conception of the box as a container of financial worth is most obvious when the box contained specie. The sample suggests that male servants were more likely to store money in their boxes than their female counterparts (figs 21 and 22). The amounts accrued in the boxes of male servants might be quite substantial - particularly for upper servants – and suggest the higher wages earned by men in service in elite households.⁵⁶⁸ Robert Durant, for example, the groom whom we met in the previous chapter, lost a ten pound note and a one crown piece from his box at his lodgings in 1786.⁵⁶⁹ Alexander Foubister, a servant to ‘a Lady in Chiswick’, likewise claimed to have lost 48 guineas along with a variety of other goods from his box and accused a postilion

⁵⁶⁶ *OBP*, January 1769, trial of John Wise John Groves, (t17690112-20); *OBP*, April 1783, trial of Robert Edwards, Ann Witney, Sarah Taylor, (t17830430-30).

⁵⁶⁷ *Letters from a Maid Servant*, p.32.

⁵⁶⁸ On wages see footnote 95.

⁵⁶⁹ *OBP*, April 1786, trial of Thomas Hobbs Henry Giles, (t17860426-3). See above, p. 163.

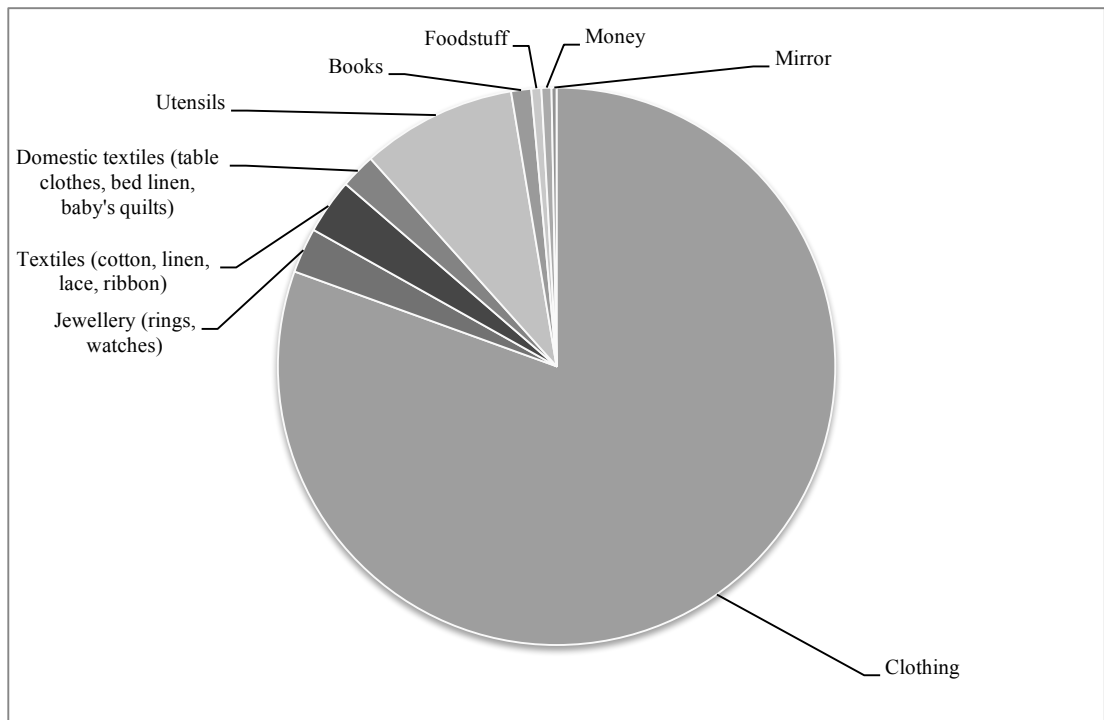


Fig. 21. Chart to show items stolen from the boxes of female servants, 1750-1800.

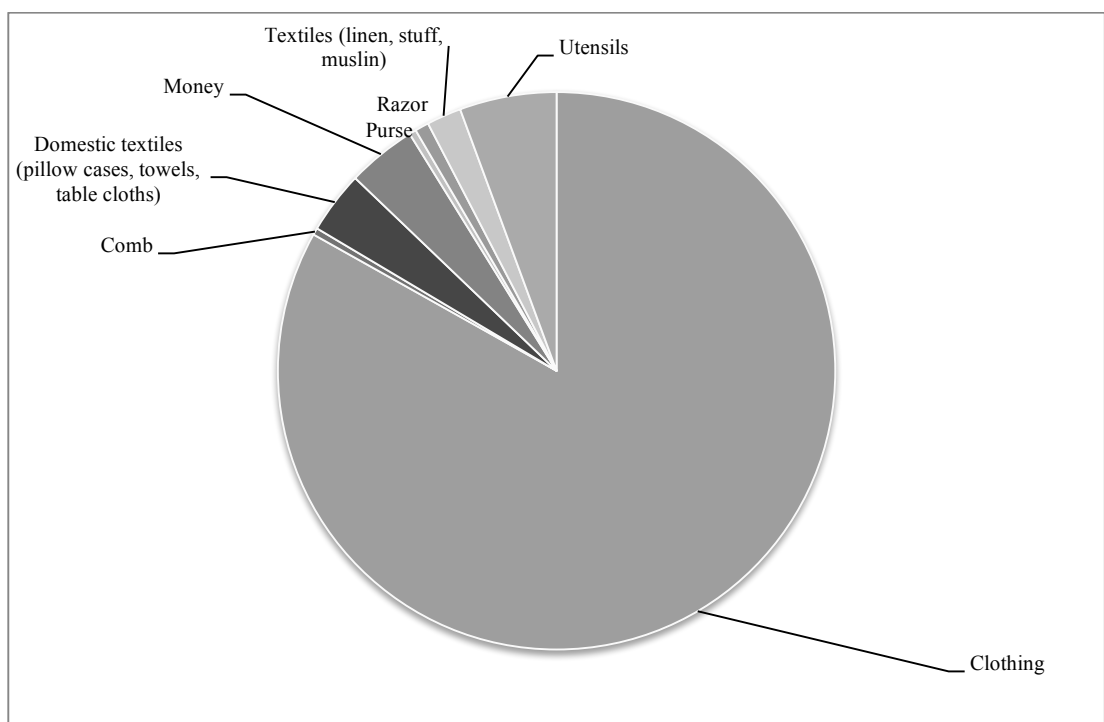


Fig. 22. Chart to show items stolen from the boxes of male servants, 1750-1800.

who had been recently discharged from the house of the crime in 1778.⁵⁷⁰ More modest sums were to be found in the boxes of male servants in less genteel establishments. John Wood, a manservant to a woman who lodged in a house on Southampton Street in Bloomsbury lost three guineas from a 'little box' inside his box at his lodging at nearby Duke Street in October 1766.⁵⁷¹ Clement Rowe, a servant at the Globe Tavern in Fore Street near Moorgate, also claimed that fourteen and a half guineas, three crowns and a shilling were stolen from his box by a porter in the same household in May 1789.⁵⁷² Rowe was certain of the monetary contexts of the box, which he described in detail:

I missed all the money which had been in the box; consisting of fifteen guineas and a half, three half crowns and a shilling, which was in a little box in the great box, and the great box I had left locked; I saw the money at half past two o'clock, when I went out; it was in a little box withinside another, the great box was locked, that was all the money that was in it.⁵⁷³

Money appears less frequently in the boxes of female servants, but there were important exceptions to this which are worth considering here.⁵⁷⁴ One of the very largest losses of money from a box (male or female) was from the box of a female servant, and was explained by her as a longstanding stockpile of monetary savings compiled over successive places. When Dorothy Foulkes lost the enormous sum of 27 pounds 17 shillings and 6 pence from her box less than a month after her arrival in London, she told the court she 'had been working for it fourteen years a servant in the country, thinking to get me some good clothes, to go into a good service in the town'.⁵⁷⁵ If country servants might save money in their boxes to get some 'good clothes, to go into a good service in the town', cash money might also be a requisite for newly arrived servants in the capital and allowed them to pay bed and board before finding a place. The importance of monetary stock for servants arriving in

⁵⁷⁰ *OBP*, February 1778, trial of Thomas Hughes, (t17780218-48).

⁵⁷¹ *OBP*, December 1766, trial of Robert Downing, (t17661217-31).

⁵⁷² *OBP*, December 1783, trial of Charles Biggs, (t17831210-53).

⁵⁷³ *OBP*, June 1789, trial of John Shepherd, (t17890603-43). For other examples of money lost from the boxes of male servants see *OBP*, April 1774, trial of John Billings, (t17740413-32); Also see *OBP*, December 1783, trial of Charles Biggs, (t17831210-53). On the importance of the masculine purse see H. Barker, 'Soul, Purse and Family: Middling and Lower-Class Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Manchester', *Social History*, Vol. 33, No. 1, (2008), pp. 12-35.

⁵⁷⁴ On this see Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 281.

⁵⁷⁵ *OBP*, February 1768, trial of Anne Robinson, otherwise Anne Cole Sophia Revell, (t17680224-65).

London for a place is most clearly demonstrated in one case that appeared before the court in May 1795.⁵⁷⁶

Lucy Stockford lost one pound and three shillings ‘in monies numbered’ from her box when it was stolen as she arrived in London from Duns Tew in Oxfordshire in April 1795. Stockford claimed her box was stolen after she was tricked into entering a brothel house on Union Street near Hanover Square by an old woman who recommended it to her as a creditable lodging. Like Hogarth’s Moll Hackabout, Stockford appears to have been the victim of a scheming madam and the ‘girls of the town’ in her employ. Although it is never stated explicitly in the *Proceedings*, the ‘truth’ of the matter and the reliability of her testimony were thought to be revealed in the contents of her box. The line of questioning appears to have been an attempt to ascertain whether the contents of her box might have been sufficiently depleted by the time Stockford arrived in London to make her amenable to the temptations of the brothel-keeper. Over the course of the trial, an ostensibly practical matter –how much money was left in the box by the time Stockford arrived in Union Street –is revealed to indicate a question of character –whether Stockford had enough social capital and material resources to resist the offers of the house. Stockford recalled that when she left her mother and father she ‘had six and twenty shillings in silver when I set off, and two or three shillings in halfpence’ in her box. Stockford claimed to have travelled to London on foot – a journey which took sixteen or seventeen days – and to have spent only five or six shillings in the process. The remainder of the money – one pound and three shillings – was the amount she claimed was in her box when she got to the brothel house, and is the amount she listed in the indictment as stolen from her. Stockford went to remarkable lengths to maintain the integrity of her monetary stock. She claimed that she ‘walked two days and had not a bit in my mouth, and only paid three pence for my lodging’. Although the court had difficulty understanding why Stockford walked the seventy-odd miles to London – with her box in tow – rather than alight a coach or cart, Stockford’s answer reveals how carefully servants might watch over their monetary savings – particularly when they were unsure of a place. Stockford stated ‘I rode in a butcher’s cart for about five miles, and I did not pay them anything... I thought perhaps I should be out of money

⁵⁷⁶ *OBP*, May 1795, trial of Alice Burroughs, Amelia Evans, (t17950520-34). This case is discussed as evidence of regional distinction in dress in Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 42.

before I got a place; and if I had come in the wagon or coach, I must have supped and done as they did'. If Stockford's statement reveal fiscal anxiety and forward-planning by a would-be servant unsure of her place in the world, the court's questioning also suggests how important the existence of fiscal resources continued to be when assessing questions of character and guarding against accusations of impropriety – particularly for women.

If boxes might contain monetary savings, they were more commonly the containers of that other failsafe of economic value – clothing. It is well known that material goods retained their value in the eighteenth century, and it is for this reason that the pawnbroker's was generally the first stop for goods stolen from servants' boxes.⁵⁷⁷ The significance of clothing in marking out social and gendered identities has been well-established, and these items clearly operated within a matrix of material meanings that incorporated taste, fashion, and propriety as well as economic security. By far the most common items to be lost from the boxes of female servants were aprons (fig. 23). As with the aprons bought by the servants examined by John Styles, these items were probably working clothes, and were made from a variety of 'workaday' fabrics.⁵⁷⁸ Rachael Blackburn who lived as a servant in Cheapside lost two 'checque linen aprons' valued by the court at three shillings as well as five others made of 'cloth' which were valued at two shillings and six pence when her box was stolen in 1785.⁵⁷⁹ Most of the boxes of female servants contained a number of aprons in a variety of materials and suggest that these items provided a relatively cheap and easy way for servants to look neat and 'clean' after participating in dirty work. Caps also appeared frequently in the record, and, as Styles has suggested, were not only an essential part of feminine dress but a key element through which 'fashion' was displayed. The value of caps lost from servants' boxes varied greatly. One muslin cap which belonged to Catherine Jones (the servant who left her box corded in the garret of her master) was valued at two pence, whereas a silk hat lost from the box of Elizabeth Curtis who served in a house on Drury Lane was valued at

⁵⁷⁷ The literature on pawnbroking is large. See, for example, B. Lemire, 'Petty pawns and informal lending: gender and the transformation of small-scale credit in England, circa 1600-18000' in K. Bruland and P. O'Brien (eds), *From Family Firms to Capitalism: Essays in Business and Industrial History in Honour of Peter Mathias*, (Oxford, 1998); J. Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey', pp. 61-80; A. Tomkins, 'Pawnbroking and the Survival Strategies of the Urban Poor in 1770s York', in King and Tomkins, *The Poor in England*, pp. 166-198.

⁵⁷⁸ Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 286.

⁵⁷⁹ *OBP*, September 1785, trial of Thomas Lewington, (t17850914-114).

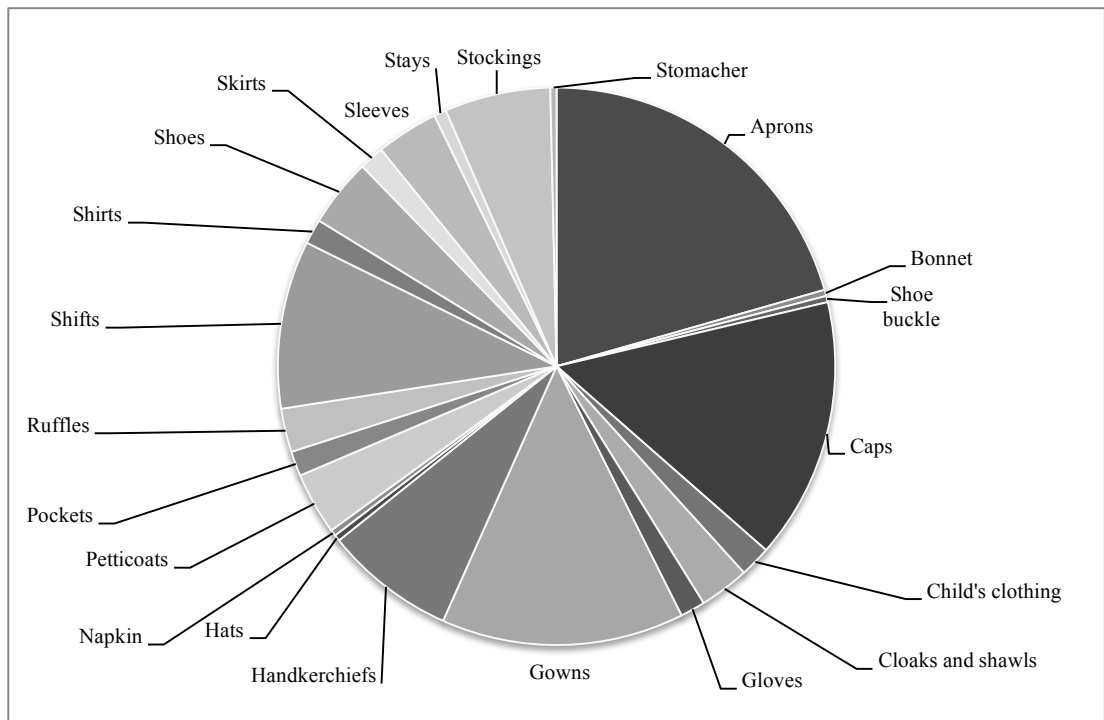


Fig. 23. Clothing stolen from the boxes of female servants, 1750-1800.

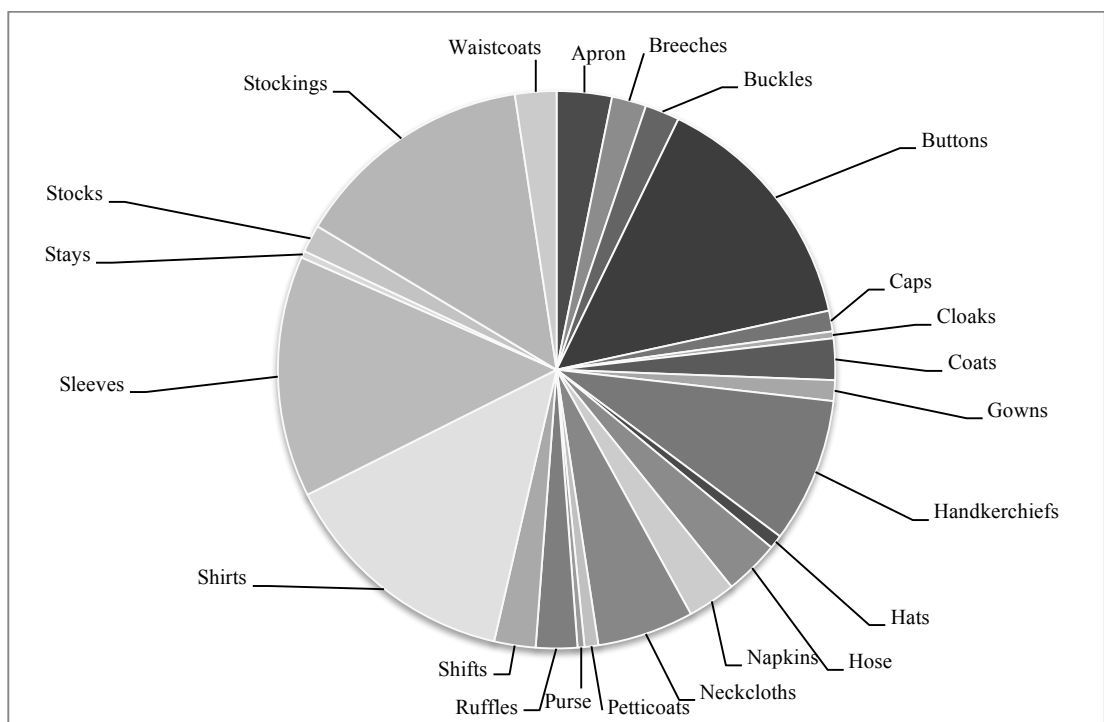


Fig. 24. Clothing stolen from the boxes of male servants, 1750-1800.

four shillings.⁵⁸⁰ The presence of a ‘three muslin borders for caps’ in the box of Mary Savage who served a doctor on Golden Square suggests the variety of less costly ways in which servants might demonstrate what Styles called ‘fashion innovation’.⁵⁸¹

A similar variety of goods is identifiable in other garments that were stolen from the boxes of female servants. Gowns were the most expensive items to be lost from these boxes, and appeared much less frequently in the sample than aprons and caps.

Although this suggests that most servants owned only one spare gown, typically made of cotton or linen, others were clearly able to acquire a sizeable collection of fashionable garments.⁵⁸² Sarah Stent, a lady’s maid in the house of Charles Hawkins Esquire, for example, lost ‘a woman’s callico gown, value 10s, three womens silk gowns, valued 1l. 10s. three satin gowns, value 2l... a cotton gown, value 10s. [and] a stuff gown, value 7s’ when she left her box at her mistress’s house to accompany her to the house in the country.⁵⁸³ As a lady’s maid living in the house of some wealth, and occupying a position of responsibility which required close proximity to her mistress and those around her, it is hardly surprising that Stent was able to purchase (or inherit) a number of fashionable goods, nor that she was the only female servant in the sample to lose stockings made out of anything other than cotton or ‘thread’; she told the court she lost ‘five pair of silk stockings’. Stent was the only servant to lose a pair of satin shoes from her box – silk stockings could hardly be worn with the leather shoes or ‘clogs’ lost from the boxes of other servants.⁵⁸⁴ If gowns and stockings indicated the variety of material possibilities open to servant maids, the shifts that were stolen from servants’ boxes were much less varied. The two shifts taken from Stent’s box were surprisingly similar to those taken from the boxes of servants working in much less salubrious surroundings. Where the information is available all the shifts stolen from the boxes of female servants–

⁵⁸⁰ *OBP*, July 1778, trial of William Daniels, (t17780715-37); *OBP*, April 1777, trial of Mary Draper, (t17770409-5).

⁵⁸¹ *OBP*, July 1795, trial of John Toplis, (t17950701-70); Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p 284.

⁵⁸² For examples of cotton and linen gowns see *OBP*, February 1778, trial of Margaret Webster, (t17780218-44); *OBP*, May 1790, trial of Robert Pirton, (t17900526-72).

⁵⁸³ *OBP*, May 1795, trial of Sarah Jones, (t17950520-35).

⁵⁸⁴ For clogs see *OBP*, July 1774, trial of Thomas Featherston, (t17740706-44). For leather shoes see *OBP*, May 1795, trial of Alice Burroughs, Amelia Evans, (t17950520-34). For pattens see *OBP*, September 1785, trial of Thomas Lewington, (t17850914-114).

seemingly irrespective of the age of servant or her place within the servant hierarchy – were made of linen, and, interestingly, were all valued at exactly two shillings.⁵⁸⁵

A variety of accessories were also lost from the boxes of female servants, and, as Styles suggested, indicate the power of relatively low-cost accessories to transform outfits.⁵⁸⁶ Handkerchiefs varied from the linen handkerchief lost to Catherine Jones and valued by the court at six pence to the ‘double muslin’ handkerchief lost to Mary Savage (whom we met as she departed the York coach at the beginning of this chapter), which was valued at four shillings.⁵⁸⁷ The statement of Ann Simpson, the housekeeper in a house on New Street in Spring Gardens, offers evidence of the everyday sartorial decision-making that governed whether or not to don a handkerchief; she told the court ‘I saw my handkerchief... in the evening, but on the morning I would not put it on, because I was about dirty work, and I chucked it upon the dresser’.⁵⁸⁸ Linen sleeves, laced and ‘worked’ ruffles, silver shoe buckles, gold rings, a ‘mock’ mother of pearl necklace, and a silver watch were also stored away, and might only escape the confines of the box on special occasions, or when their owners had need to deposit them at the pawn shop in times of emergency. Although there is an important difference between the meanings of items of clothing worn in the house or street and those folded away or stored in the box, it is not as simple as the distinction between the display of ‘fashion’ on the person and the storage of goods for their economic value. A servant clad in neat (but not showy) attire demonstrated her capacity to industry and labour, her prudent stowing of wages to purchase the goods, and the diligence with which she watched over her material belongings. Likewise, goods acquired through the types of consumption practices outlined by Styles and Wigston Smith surely evoked associations of their owner’s sartorial style even when packed up in the box.⁵⁸⁹

The boxes of male servants were also stashed with items of clothing (figs 22 and 24). It is worth reiterating that these men were probably working and living in much larger establishments than their female counterparts, and that this had a significant

⁵⁸⁵ See, for example, *OBP*, July 1796, trial of John Toplis, (t17950701-70); *OBP*, May 1795, trial of Alice Burroughs, Amelia Evans, (t17950520-34).

⁵⁸⁶ Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p. 284.

⁵⁸⁷ *OBP*, July 1778, trial of William Daniels, (t17780715-37); *OBP*, July 1785, trial of John Toplis, (t17950701-70).

⁵⁸⁸ *OBP*, December 1783, trial of Thomas Martin, (t17831219-45).

⁵⁸⁹ Styles, *The Dress of the People*; Wigston Smith, ‘Callico Madams’.

effect on the material worlds available to them. We have seen the difference between the lady's maid Lucy Stent and the majority of the female servants who appeared before the court, and this distinction appears all the more significant between male and female servants. Stent's master was identified by the court as 'Esquire', but many of the male servants whose boxes were stolen were employed by titled individuals. Like the boxes belonging to female servants, the boxes belonging to these men contained the basic masculine ensemble; shirts, stockings, handkerchiefs, breeches, hose, neck cloths and waistcoats were all found in the boxes of male servants. Again, the most common items – shirts, stockings and handkerchiefs– were those items that needed to be changed and washed frequently. Although shirts were, like the shifts of female servants, almost unanimously made from linen, the number and quality of these items varied considerably. The cheapest shirt to appear in the sample was a linen shirt which was valued at fourteen pence and had been stolen from Edward Pipe's box at his place at the Coach and Horses public house at Hampstead.⁵⁹⁰ Four linen shirts lost to Alexander Foubister, who, as we have seen, served in the house of Lady, were clearly much different, and were valued at twenty shillings.⁵⁹¹ The particular apparel required of male servants' roles, and the manner in which the servant hierarchy might become inscribed within the box is also evident at court. When Robert Durant's box was stolen from his lodgings, its contents reflected the work demanded of a groom in an elite establishment. The box contained a livery cloth coat, a pair of velveteen breeches, and a pair of silver boot buckles as well as two pairs of leather breeches, a pair of leather hose, and a variety of other items.⁵⁹² A variety of other items suggest the distinctive 'uniform' of male servants in larger households and the important role they performed as agents of display. Edward Hanson, who was a coachman of one Mr George Richard Carter, for example, lost three formal linen stocks and a 'silver stock buckle' as well as a variety of linen shirts and a pair of silver shoe buckles when his box was taken from his lodging room in the stables.⁵⁹³ Similarly when James Clark's box was stolen from his room at the top of the house, he not only lost two 'cloth' coats and waistcoats, two pairs of leather breeches, and three pairs of worsted stockings, but also a velvet cap

⁵⁹⁰ *OBP*, June 1789, trial of John Hall, (t17890603-54).

⁵⁹¹ *OBP*, February 1778, trial of Thomas Hughes, (t17780218-48).

⁵⁹² *OBP*, April 1786, trial of Thomas Hobbs, Henry Giles, (t17860426-3). Not in the sample.

⁵⁹³ *OBP*, February 1756, trial of Richard Harvey, (t17560225-8).

with gold lace band, two yards of gold lace, a pair of spurs plated with silver, two crape hatbands, and a man's hat with a silver button and loop.⁵⁹⁴

The contents of servants' boxes were not limited only to clothing and specie. Over time servants might also acquire a range of domestic paraphernalia alongside these items. Along with the variety of clothing lost when his box was stolen, James Clark also lost a silver tea spoon, a pruning knife, a 'leather pocket book with a silver clasp' and a common prayer book. These small portable items might have become props in home-making practices whilst in place, and marked the beginning of a more substantial domestic collection later on in life. When Elizabeth Harvey left her box at the Register Office, six silver teaspoons, half a pound of tea, and half a pound of sugar were lost alongside a variety of clothing.⁵⁹⁵ It is possible that Harvey was a more experienced servant or housekeeper and had acquired these goods over successive positions – as with Dorothy Foulkes, she told the court she had 'lately' come from the country. Mary Russell, a servant in the Halfway House Inn at Knightsbridge had a more extensive collection of domestic utensils in her box which was stolen by the porter whom she had entrusted to carry it to her next place.⁵⁹⁶ As well as three linen gowns, seven aprons, a petticoat, three pairs of stockings, three shifts and a pair of stuff shoes, Russell's box contained a silver tea-spoon, a silver seal, a gold hat band, and two and half guineas and a crown piece. Russell identified herself at court as a widow, and it seems likely that her relative material security was related to her marital status; perhaps forced into service after her husband's death, her box appears to have contained the last remnants of her married life and domestic surety. Similarly, although Mary Savage was identified at court as a spinster, the contents of her box suggest she was experienced in domestic provision; she, almost certainly, had a child in tow. As well as a vast expanse of clothing and linen, Savage's box, which arrived in London after she had found a place at a doctor's house in Golden Square, also contained:

three childrens cotton frocks, value 12s. a yard and a quarter of cotton, value 3s... four child's linen shirts, value 3l. a huckaback child's clout, value 3d. a child's beaver hat, value 1s. a patched-worked cradle quilt, value 1s. a white linen curtain, value 6s. three pair of linen pillow cases, value 6d. a diaper table cloth, value 2s. a huckaback ditto, value 6d. four pieces of new linen

⁵⁹⁴ *OBP*, April 1774, trial of John Billings, (t17740413-32).

⁵⁹⁵ *OBP*, December 1799, trial of William Clarke, (t17991204-41).

⁵⁹⁶ *OBP*, December 1789, trial of William Clarke, (t17891209-32).

cloth, value 3s...seven yards of various coloured ribbon, value 2s. six china cups, value 1s. 2d. six china saucers, value 1s. 2d. two china basons, value 1s. a china coffee mug, value 2s. four tumbler glasses, value 2s. three glass jars, value 6d. one glass collar, value 6d. a pair of iron snuffers, value 2d. a small mahogany tea board, value 6d. a common prayer book, value 2s. four other books, value 2s.⁵⁹⁷

The contents of these boxes reveals the ways in which material life was transformed by marriage.⁵⁹⁸ Two of the male servants in the sample were identifiable as married men through the contents of their boxes. Unusually for a male servant, William King, a porter for a soap boiler and tallow chandler who lived with his master on Oxford Road, lost a table cloth marked with his name from his box. The court, perhaps seeking to understand how a male servant might have lost an item so associated with femininity confirmed for the court that he had ‘been a married man, I believe, and had lost your wife’.⁵⁹⁹ The contents of Edward Wooton’s box, lost as he left his place to join the militia in 1772, was similarly unusual for male servants. Wooton’s box contained:

A black silk cloak, two pieces of printed linen, three aprons, four shifts, one muslin handkerchief, a napkin, a pillow bier, three pair of shift sleeves, one stock, one night cap, a silk apron with black lace, three odd ruffles, a yard of stuff, a pair of stays, a petticoat, two caps, three other napkins, a pillow case, three old ruffles, one counterpane, two towels, one coloured shift, one other petticoat, three napkins, three other aprons, three towels, one white linen gown, one check apron, one red and white linen gown, and one other linen gown.⁶⁰⁰

Again, difference is explained by Wooton’s marital status; Wooton’s wife appeared at court and herself reported that she ‘packed the things up in the box; there was all my wearing apparel’.

*

Although it is the economic value of the box’s contents that appears most readily at court, the emotional resonance of these items is also suggested. As a space in which material items were gathered together for the future, the box might be seen to offer the potential for what Gaston Bachelard called the ‘perspective of hope’ for ‘things

⁵⁹⁷ *OBP*, July 1795, John Toplis, (t17950701-70).

⁵⁹⁸ For a much more thorough analysis of this see Ponsonby and Hussey, *Single Homemaker*.

⁵⁹⁹ *OBP*, April 1795, trial of Jane Wheeler, (t17950416-78).

⁶⁰⁰ *OBP*, June 1772, trial of Nathaniel Cain, Elizabeth Spur, Jeremiah Wells, (t17720603-11).

kept in reserve'.⁶⁰¹ Letters from family members and love tokens from admirers might have provided reminders of the past as well as material prompts through which to consider the future.⁶⁰² Although these items were not generally financially valuable enough to feature in indictments at court, they do appear obliquely in the *Proceedings*. Mary Richardson was reunited with her box when a ward beadle identified a letter that was found inside as addressed to her. The indictment lists only those goods worthy of theft, yet this brief mention suggests her box was also the place where Richardson stored her written correspondence.⁶⁰³ Although the content of this letter remain obscure, another trial report suggests the box was the location of letters between lovers. Sarah Proctor, an apprentice who was probably bound over to 'housewifery', stored the letters she received from her husband-to-be in her box at her mistress's house. This epistolary practice is revealed at court only because Proctor's husband was accused of bigamy, and the court endeavoured to 'prove he wrote a great many Letters full of Love, and afterwards broke open her Box and took them away'.⁶⁰⁴ It may well have been this type of letter that Anna Maria Neale asked another witness to 'take care of' whilst she was incarcerated in Bridewell for stealing from her master's house. Ann Gibbons claimed 'I went to her in Bridewell, she said, she bought the Handkerchief in Rag-Fair; that she had nothing of her Master's, and bid me take care of the Writings that were in the box'.⁶⁰⁵

The diary of James Jenkins, a Quaker apprentice who served in a number of households in the metropolis in the middle of the eighteenth century, offers further evidence of the ways in which the box became a storehouse for intimate items. Lost on his way to London, and abandoned by the side of the road with only his box for company, Jenkins recalled that he 'sat down upon my box, and gave vent to the feelings of excessive grief'.⁶⁰⁶ Fearing he was lost from the family forever, he remembered his master's household fondly, and wistfully recalled 'Betty Randsome the Chambermaid who had won my heart with kindness; she had given me her profile cut out on paper as large as life which I had kept in my box several years, and

⁶⁰¹ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 80. Also see F. Parrott, "'It's Not Forever' The Material Culture of Hope", *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol. 10, Issue 3, (2005), pp. 245-262.

⁶⁰² On this see S. Stabile, *Memory's Daughters: The Material Culture of Remembrance in Eighteenth-Century America*, (Ithaca, 2004).

⁶⁰³ *OBP*, December 1792, trial of Joseph Hoare, (t17921215-10).

⁶⁰⁴ *OBP*, July 1742, trial of William Bury, alias Henry Parminter, (t17420603-18).

⁶⁰⁵ *OBP*, July 1742, trial of Anna Maria Neale, (t17420714-24).

⁶⁰⁶ The Records and Recollections of James Jenkins.

(young as I was) occasionally viewed it with the fondness of a lover'. The profile of the maid recalled not only the maid's kind gift and the fondness that Jenkins had felt for her, but also his repeated viewings of this object and yearning for the maid over the 'several years' it remained in his box. Northcote's *The Wanton in her Bed Chamber*, which was explored in the previous chapter, also suggests that love tokens might also have found their way into the boxes of female servants (fig. 9). Northcote's description of the scene draws attention to the garters which are sprawled across the floor in front of her box, which, he suggests, 'display a love motto'.⁶⁰⁷

One of the clearest examples of the ways in which the box facilitated the practical preparation for future life is suggested in the storage of childbed linen and 'baby things' in the boxes of female servants.⁶⁰⁸ Sadly, these examples are passed down to us as evidence in infanticide cases; it was servants' boxes that were searched for evidence that servants had 'provided' for their unborn children, these small items understood to offer material proof that a servant intended to keep her baby.⁶⁰⁹

Hannah Spires, who served in the house of Susannah Cooney, was acquitted of the murder of her child when her step-mother produced some childbed linen which she had stored in her box at her father's house.⁶¹⁰ When Mary Samuel, servant to John and Rose Hall, who lived on Jewin Street, gave birth after two years in their service, it was her mistress who appeared at court for her. Rose Hall stated not only that she was a 'good servant, and behaved well; that she was a very clean body, and she did look upon her character as undeniable', but also that she had taken her key, 'looked in her box and there found some things proper for a child'. A gown, caps, blankets and 'several things' from the box were produced at court, and confirmed Samuel's defence that the child was 'born dead; I had no intention to destroy it, had it been

⁶⁰⁷ Northcote, *Diligence and Dissipation*, p. 14.

⁶⁰⁸ For 'baby things' see *OBP*, February 1768, trial of Mary Robinson, (t17680224-42). On the 'hope chest' see Herbert A. Otto and Robert B. Andersen, 'The Hope Chest and Dowry: American Custom?' *The Family Life Coordinator*, Vol. 16: No. 1, (1967), pp. 15-19. On the trousseau see R. Sarti, *Europe at Home; Family and Material Culture, 1500-1800*, (New Haven, 2002), pp. 45-8, p. 200, p. 212.

⁶⁰⁹ On servants and infanticide see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 110; Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics*, pp. 137-138; L. Gowing 'Secret Births and Infanticide in Seventeenth-Century England', *P&P*, No. 156, (1997), pp. 87-115. Also see A. Wilson, 'Illegitimacy and its implications in mid-eighteenth century London: the evidence of the Foundling Hospital', *Continuity and Chance*, Vol. 4, Issue 1, (1989), pp. 103-64.

⁶¹⁰ *OBP*, January 1751, trial of Hannah Spires, (t17510116-52). The box was also the place where many servants hid the lifeless bodies of their infants. See *OBP*, February 1768, trial of Mary Robinson, (t17680224-42); *OBP*, October 1790, trial of Martha Miller, (t17680224-42); *OBP*, October 1761, trial of Frances Whaley, (t17611021-23).

born alive, for I had provided for it'.⁶¹¹ As a repository of baby things, the box stored the potential for life after service; like a dowry chest or a trousseau, servants' boxes stored items for the future.

Searching the box

If the opening of the box revealed the innocence of maid servants in cases of infanticide, it often revealed their guilt of theft from the house. The *Proceedings* bear witness to the searching of servants' boxes by masters, mistresses and officers of the court. The search might be seen as evidence of the master's spatial control over the person of the servant and their belongings. This enforced ransacking was clearly understood as a legitimate action, and one that reflected servants' subordinate position within the domestic space. The search, or the threat of it, might constitute part of what Laura Gowing has called the 'subtler bodily experiences' through which servants' subordinate position was reinforced, experienced and performed in early modern England.⁶¹² The search of the box was often accompanied by the search of servants' rooms, pockets, and persons.⁶¹³ Servants' bodies, and the spaces they inhabited were clearly vulnerable to interference, but the relations between servants and their masters and mistresses (as, indeed, between all people) were changing in this period. By the end of the eighteenth century, early-modern assertions about the totality of employer control (always contested) were being increasingly eroded by enlightenment philosophy, humanistic discourse, and changing conceptions of the location of labour. As part of the household family, excessive cruelty towards servants was never legitimate, but the tyranny of masters and mistresses was increasingly understood to be antithetical to English mastery. In the context of a growing national ideology based around ideas of the freeborn Englishman and the opposition to slavery, excessive force over another human being, either physical or psychological, was understood as despotic barbarity. The searching of the box reflects the subtle shifts in boundaries between servant and employer in this period,

⁶¹¹ *OBP*, December 1762, trial of Mary Samuel (t17621208-27). Also see *OBP*, April 1767, trial of Sarah Hopkins, (t17670429-52), *OBP*, April 1771, trial of Elizabeth Parkins, (t17710410-35).

⁶¹² See Gowing, *Common Bodies*, p.6.

⁶¹³ On privacy and pockets see A. Fennetaux, 'Women's Pockets and the Construction of Privacy in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 20, no. 3, (2008), pp. 307-334.

and a changing concept of subjectivity and personhood made manifest in material practices and boundaries within the house.

We can assume that only a tiny minority of the occasions in which masters and mistresses searched their servants' boxes have been recorded in the *Proceedings*. Yet these cases reveal expectations about the intrusions into the box that must have reflected something of everyday practice. Although the searching of servants' boxes was well within the confines of the law and the authority of the master and mistress, the ways in which the searches were reported suggests that a series of informal injunctions against trespass were in place. As Amanda Vickery has suggested, 'the violence done to these internal boundaries was an insistent theme of the victim's narratives, probably to confirm malicious intent, but also to invoke customary taboo'.⁶¹⁴ The opening of the box was enacted within a set of firmly established guidelines that carefully demarcated legitimate from illegitimate action, guidelines which suggest that masters' and mistresses' rights over the goods within their households was not unlimited. The temporal framework of the search appears clearly, and reveals that the movement of individuals into and out of a household was a significant moment of domestic anxiety. When a servant left a place, the master or mistress of the house seems to have been permitted (although far from obliged) to search the box. The search of the box typically corresponded with the end of a servant's place, and can be seen as part of the cyclical material practices of stocktaking which went on within the household. This timetable of domestic material appraisal appears to have been followed even when a servant had been suspected during their time in place. Although Alice Boone and her family had noticed 'two or three trifling things' were missing during the time of Elizabeth Hughes' service in their house, they did not think it 'proper' to search her box until she left the house for another place in December 1759.⁶¹⁵ Similarly, the search of Ann Goldwell's box in 1757 corresponded with her departure from the house. Margaret Titcome, Goldwell's mistress, was clear that it was only *after* the girl gave warning that her box was searched, and, like many mistresses who appeared before the court claimed that was

⁶¹⁴ Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home', p. 165.

⁶¹⁵ *OBP*, December 1759, trial of Elizabeth Hughes (t17591205-3). Also see *OBP*, July 1760, trial of Frances Newcome (t17600709-5).

the first occasion on which her box had been searched. The *Proceedings* record the following exchange:

Q. [court] Did you ever search her box before?
M[argaret Titcome]. No.
Q. [court] Did you never see it open?
M[argaret Titcome]. No, never in my life before.⁶¹⁶

Although, in some households, the search was routine, and enacted – without exception – as servants left the house, in other households the search was clearly related to the trustworthiness of the servant in question.⁶¹⁷ When Martha Burgess left her place at White Conduit House in Islington after three years, for example, no attempt was made to search her box. Christopher Bartholomew, the master of the house, stated ‘I had no reason to suspect this woman, I heard nothing of it’. Martha Wagner, another servant in the house, confirmed that a search did not take place that day, and reiterated that she had ‘never searched any servant’s box’.⁶¹⁸ If trust in a particular servant might mean a search was neglected, mistrust was certainly engendered if servants attempted to leave the house without presenting their boxes for inspection. Thomas Read, who lived in Cheapside in 1787 recorded this suspicion in detail. He told the court:

The prisoner was a servant of mine about six months; he gave me warning to quit my service...I told him to bring his box, and I would settle with him and pay his wages; he said he had removed his box a fortnight before into Fann-street, Aldersgate-street; I said, as you have removed your box, without asking me to look into it, and having reason to suppose you had wrong me of different things, such as laying out money in the house, and so on, I told him I would go with him to the place where the box was; I asked to see the box, because I had my suspicions, that he had robbed me at different times.⁶¹⁹

Masters and mistresses like Thomas Read were careful to set out their suspicions for the court, and typically sought to prove the innocence of other suspects, and offer material or corroborating evidence of their suspicions *before* they admitted to searching their servants’ boxes or calling a constable to do it for them. Jarvis Chambers who appeared before the court on the 9th January 1776 testified to the

⁶¹⁶ *OBP*, September 1757, trial of Ann Goldwell (t17570914-33).

⁶¹⁷ For example, *OBP*, December 1736, trial of Phillis Pratter, other Fratter, (t17361208-2).

⁶¹⁸ *OBP*, September 1788, trial of Martha Burgess, (t17880910-72).

⁶¹⁹ *OBP*, December 1787, trial of Richard Dyke, (t17871212-76).

domestic plotting that went on to confirm his suspicions *before* the boundary of his servant's box was breached. He claimed:

the prisoner was our porter: having some reason to suspect his honesty, I set a person the 18th of December to watch him; that person informed me the prisoner had taken some halfpence out of the till; I went to his lodgings, and finding some of our goods there, I got a warrant and searched his box.⁶²⁰

Although Chambers was concerned about the honesty of a porter who lived in a separate lodging, his statement is also typical of those who searched the boxes of their live-in servants. Elizabeth Barclay similarly told the court that it was only after missing a variety of goods that she began to suspect her servant Mary Clarke because 'having so many new things: I knew she had no way of getting them, but dishonesty...I sent for a constable; I searched her box when she and the constable were present'.⁶²¹ Although the searching of the box was commonplace, it undermined the relationships of trust, duty and loyalty that bound the household together, and the defensive statements of masters and mistresses suggest that their own reputation was on the line. Although sneaky servant thieves and their accomplices was a mainstay of contemporary literature, there was an assumption that their actions were, at least in part, a response to poor governance and regulation by their masters and mistresses.

The rigid protocol of the search protected masters and mistresses from criticisms of indecency, impropriety and tyranny of intrusion. In most of the cases that appeared before the court, a constable was present when the box was searched, even if they were not responsible for the search itself. A public official legitimated the search, as well as evidence discovered during the course of it. Constables also appeared at court to confirm confessions which were offered by the accused at the time of the search, or when a 'promise' (usually of non-prosecution) was offered to a servant if they confessed. Although the official protocol appears only obliquely in these records, it seems to have been necessary for a constable to obtain a warrant in order to search a box belonging to a servant.⁶²² On those occasions where a more informal search of

⁶²⁰ *OBP*, January 1776, trial of Henry Lloyd, (t17760109-18).

⁶²¹ *OBP*, July 1781, trial of Mary Clarke, (t17810711-48).

⁶²² For an example of a constable refusing to search a servant's box without a warrant see, *OBP*, September 1794, (t17940917-94). There is also a reference to constables acquiring a specific 'body warrant' for the search of a pocket or person, *OBP*, December 1742, trial of Sarah Sharp, (t17421208-53), *OBP*, December 1792, trial of George Rankin, Abraham Mayo, Elizabeth Owen, (t17921215-21).

the box took place and was recorded in the *Proceedings* (often before a constable was called), other individuals of social standing were often called into the household to witness it. The statement of William Miller, who had been called to search the box of the porter William Delaney recorded something of this process. Miller told the court:

I went to Mr. Carr's to search this man's room and boxes. I waited some little time before the man came in, and I said, William your master informs me there is a suspicion you have behaved dishonestly, he said, he was very sorry, he did not know that he did any such thing: now, says I, you have an opportunity of convincing your master, if you will do what I desire you to do; there is a suspicion that some things are secreted in your boxes, will you immediately deliver up the keys, the man took out the keys with some little reluctance, and gave them to his master, we went into the room...then his master opened one or two boxes.⁶²³

The presence of a public representative, either a constable, or, like William Miller, a neighbour, appears to have overridden what seems to be the most basic criteria for the searching of the box, that of gender. Because the search of the box was frequently conducted alongside that of the pocket (and, less usually, the person) of the servant, and because the box was usually located in their bedchamber – which, as we have seen, was the most provocative of spaces – it was generally a member of the same sex that was responsible for the search. This appears to have been particularly important for female servants, whose economic wellbeing depended on a reputation of sexual innocence.⁶²⁴ When a mistress was not present, other female members of the household (including other female servants) might be involved in the search. When Mary Davis and Hannah Wynne were accused of theft in 1790, the maid of the house was called to assist in their searching. Although it was 'Turner' the shopman who accosted the two women, he requested that the maid of the house performed this domestic duty. He told the court that Wynne 'turned out her pockets, and desired me to search her. I said It was not *proper* to search her; and I called up the maid; then she searched the child in my presence'.⁶²⁵ The impropriety of the shopman's search of these two young women was related not only to his gender, but also to his status

⁶²³ *OBP*, June 1783, trial of William Delaney, (t17830604-35).

⁶²⁴ On the 'sexual double standard' see K. Thomas, 'The Double Standard', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 20, Issue 2, (1959), pp. 195-216; Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*; A. Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*, (New Haven and London, 1995).

⁶²⁵ *OBP*, April 1790, trial of Mary Davis and Hannah Wynne, (t17900424-45). Also see *OBP*, November 1794, trial of Elizabeth Gray, (t17941111-45). For an example of a housekeeper searching a maid see *OBP*, April, 1780, trial of Margaret Bradshaw, (t17800405-14).

as a single man. The significance of marital status in legitimating the male searching of the female body was revealed in another case in which one searcher reassured another that ‘if you are going to feel, we are all married men’.⁶²⁶ As with entry into the chambers of female servants, the search of pockets and boxes was associated with the body, and was thought of in sexual terms.

Mistresses, perhaps because of their sex and their everyday responsibility over their female servants, seem to have felt entitled to flout the established patterns of searching, certainly within their own households. When Robert Ansell and his wife Sarah suspected their servant Anne Copus of theft in 1782, their individual strategies were indicative of broader trends of domestic behaviour. Robert Ansell’s approach was to attempt to acquire evidence against the young servant maid. He told the court that he ‘desired every body in the house to give attention to which way she went’.⁶²⁷ The master of the house, on this occasion, relied on his power over other members of the household to obtain evidence that his servant was stealing from him. His wife, Sarah Ansell, was less cautious. Ansell told the court ‘my wife had not patience, she said she would go up stairs, she went, and in her box she found the mug’. Although Sarah Ansell’s action suggests unmediated access to the box belonging to her servant (she even opened it with her own key), the records reveal that this access was not unproblematic. Having found the stolen mug in Copus’s box, Sarah Ansell told the court ‘I was suddenly surprised. I having nobody with me I thought it might be wrong to open the box’. Informal searching was clearly understood by this mistress to be within the bounds of her domestic authority, although she recognised it was ‘wrong’ and that it might illegitimate the findings as evidence at court, particularly as it was not seen by any corroborating witnesses.

Although mistresses predominated amongst searchers of the boxes of maid servants, it was masters who were associated with the violent breaking open of it, which usually ended a protracted verbal interaction between master, mistress and servant. The searching of Mary Sherman’s box in 1762 highlights the different roles that masters and mistresses could adopt during the search; although it was Mr Barnard’s wife that turned Sherman out of the house and, as she was leaving with her box, ‘insisted upon seeing what it contained’, Mr Barnard stepped in to restore authority

⁶²⁶ *OBP*, December 1750, trial of Jane Faulker, otherwise Steward (t17501205-57).

⁶²⁷ *OBP*, April 1782, trial of Ann Copus, (t17820410-23).

when the maid refused.⁶²⁸ He told the court ‘when my wife insisted upon seeing what it contained...she at first refused it; then I insisted upon her setting down the box, and forced it open’. Elsewhere, the threat of violence to the box was enough for a servant to hand over the keys. The haberdasher John Hopley stated of his servant Ann Goulbourn that ‘at first she said she could not find the key of it; but when she found we would break it open, then she open’d it’.⁶²⁹ That the opening of the box revealed a variety of goods that Goulbourn had pilfered from her master’s shop suggests the maid sought to protect the integrity of her box over her innocence. The threat of the breaking of the box appears to have convinced servants of the seriousness of their predicament, and to have persuaded them to reveal the contents of the box, and either accept their guilt, or adopt an alternative strategy through which to explain the items within it.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it seems to have been more legitimate for a master to break open the box than to search the pockets of their maid servants for the key. The violent breaking of the box aligned with the type of domestic discipline expected of a patriarch whilst the searching of pockets was closely associated with a type of corporeal proximity that was avoided by masters. When William Bryan, an attorney who lived in George Street in Westminster, was told by his trusted male servant that Sarah Bird was stealing from him, he told the court:

I asked her to let me examine her box; this she refused to do: on which I called up one of the other servants, and I asked him to give me the poker into the room; she still persisted, and I broke open the box with the poker; when I had so broke it open, I desired her to let me see what was there.⁶³⁰

Although Bryan appeared hesitant about breaking open Bird’s box (and not only gave her a number of opportunities to open it herself, but continued to ask her permission to look inside even once it had been broken it open), the violence done by his poker seems to have been preferable to the searching of her pockets. When the court asked him whether the key could have been found upon her, he replied ‘she would not deliver it up, she had it in her pocket’. Although Mary Sherman’s refusal to have her box searched was overpowered by the violence of her master, she too managed to evade the search of her pockets by offering up the steals within; the

⁶²⁸ *OBP*, February 1762, trial of Mary Sherman, (t17620224-4).

⁶²⁹ *OBP*, January 1756, trial of Ann Goldbourn, (t17560115-33).

⁶³⁰ *OBP*, July 1794, trial of Sarah Bird, (t17940716-59).

constable stated that ‘being desired, I was going to search her pockets, but she prevented me by putting her hand in her pocket, and pulling out this cap and handkerchief’.⁶³¹ That these items are those that Sherman was accused of stealing makes her resistance all the more interesting; rather than resistance to the search necessarily being about concealing guilt, this servant seems to have been resisting the act of the search itself.

The association between the boxes belonging to maidservants and the female body appears clearly in the records, and is suggested, as Vickery has recognised, by the representation of Moll’s box in Hogarth’s series.⁶³² Safely clamped shut as the innocent Moll arrived in London from the country, the box was symbolically plundered in the penultimate plate as Moll lies dying of venereal disease (fig. 20). The open box also appears as a symbol of sexual immorality in the third print in Northcote’s series and in Jean-Frédéric Schall’s late-eighteenth century *Girl with a birdcage seating on a bed* (fig. 8). In each case, linen is visible at the boxes edge. In the *Proceedings* too, the storage of servants’ clothing (particularly underwear) is a significant factor connecting the box to servants’ bodies and to sexuality. Mary Kelly used her ‘old stockings’ and ‘dirty hussif’ to conceal the money she had stolen from her master’s pocket in her box.⁶³³ Mary Price concealed ten yards of linen cloth stolen from her master’s shop in her ‘dirty linen’ inside her box.⁶³⁴ The contents of the box appear to have cautioned too close an inspection of it, even when its boundaries were breached. Although the searching of the box was clearly commonplace, the rigour and extent of it varied enormously. Again, this was related to the gender of searcher and searchee. Thomas Yorke, who discharged Martha Collins from his house in 1776, told the court he ‘just looked over the *surface* of the things’ when he searched her box (my emphasis).⁶³⁵ Similarly, when Mary Price’s box was searched by her master, he told the court he first ‘passed over her things promiscuously’.⁶³⁶ A more thorough rifle was occasioned only when he spotted something belonging to him; when he happened upon a bundle made of a flannel petticoat at the bottom of the box, the servant refused to let him see it, claimed it was

⁶³¹ *OBP*, February 1762, trial of Mary Sherman, (t17620224-4).

⁶³² Vickery, ‘Englishman’s Home’, p. 166.

⁶³³ *OBP*, October 1749, trial of Mary Kelly, (t17491011-1).

⁶³⁴ *OBP*, June 1796, trial of Mary Price, (t17960622-57).

⁶³⁵ *OBP*, January 1776, trial of Martha Collins, (t17760109-29).

⁶³⁶ *OBP*, October 1749, trial of Mary Kelly, (t17491011-1).

her 'dirty linen' and spoke of the 'indelnicacy' of his opening of it. Marked by the maid's body, the dirty linen in the box was clearly understood as a barrier that served to keep her employer's hands at bay. The search of the box reveals the blurred lines between material goods and the person in this period, and suggest the complex boundaries of propriety and decency that marked out the female body.

Although male servants were subject to the same searching of their boxes by their masters and mistresses, this was not recorded in anywhere near as much detail by the *Proceedings*. It can be suggested that male domestics were perhaps less dependent on the domestic work offered by the household, and were therefore more likely to flee the house before a search took place. It is arguable too that their financial worth, character and credit was less tied up in the contents of their box, and that they were more likely to abandon their goods than gamble with court proceedings. This is not to say that male servants did not resist the search, but that this resistance was not as evident in the sample, and was constructed in quite different terms. The masculine confrontation between servant and master is constructed differently to the complex negotiation of appropriate behaviour, 'indelnicacy' and obedience between masters and female servants. John Maxey, for example, was 'collared' by his master when he claimed not to have the key to his box, who then 'endeavoured to get it out of his pocket'. Maxey's response suggests that the male servants too could use their body as a cloaking device. After Maxey's pocket was breached by his master, he told the court he 'rushed them [the keys] into his breeches, and endeavoured to get out of my possession'. As with female servants, it was the threat of violence (this time to the person and not the box) and recourse to the legal system that restored authority to the master. Maxey's master told the court: 'I was obliged to take up the poker and threaten to knock him down if he did not deliver the key; at last I sent for a warrant, and we took the key by force; the first thing we did we went to the apartment and opened the box'.⁶³⁷

For innocent servants, the search of their box was thought to guarantee their character against future accusations, and many servants insisted that their masters or mistresses looked over their boxes before they quit the house. When a variety of household goods were found in Elizabeth Hart's box, for example, she told the court:

⁶³⁷ *OBP*, September 1793, trial of John Maxey, Judith Curran, (t17930911-66).

‘I am innocent of it... I asked my mistress to look in my box; she would not; she said, she had no suspicion of my robbing her’.⁶³⁸ Willingly opening their boxes, handing over keys, and turning out pockets were gestures of innocence, and registered that servants had nothing to hide. These statements of material openness reiterate the anxieties about spatial and material segregation revealed in the previous chapter. Time and again, servants were reminded that if they had nothing to hide they would open their boxes for inspection, or allow their pockets to be searched. The porter who came to collect Ann Goldwell’s box (presumably hoping to dissolve the escalating tension in the household), told the court that he attempted to dissuade the mistress of the house from calling the constable saying ‘I imagine there is no call, madam, for this trouble, for I believe the girl has nothing there that she is afraid or ashamed of’.⁶³⁹ Another witness, a lodger at the house recalled that ‘we told her, as she said she had nothing in the box but what was her own, she had better let it be searched’. The court looked favourably on servants who complied ‘willingly’ to the search. Immediate compliance was translated as a sign of innocence, or at least as obedience, and reluctance was as a sign of guilt, insubordination and domestic disorder.

A resistance to the expectation of accessibility was, however, evident in the record. Even as these cases testify to the failure of servants to maintain the boundaries of their box, resistance to the search was clearly expressed. Thomas Dolly told the court it was ‘with some reluctance she [his servant Helena Holman] would permit it to be done; but at last she pulled the key out of her pockets; and unlocked the box’.⁶⁴⁰ The servants who appeared at court (most of whom, it has to be, had something to hide) adopted a variety of tactics to prevent the searching of their boxes. The methods adopted often served to delay the search and momentarily maintain the boundaries of their material worlds (and the innocence of the servant). Servant reluctance was often expressed through a stalling tactic in which they claimed not to be able to find their key. John Hinxman, for example, told his master that he had lost the key to his box although it was later found in his pocket, and William Coolley told the constable his key was at his mother’s house when it too was retrieved from his

⁶³⁸ *OBP*, October 1777, trial of Elizabeth Hart, (t17771015-26).

⁶³⁹ *OBP*, September 1757, trial of Ann Goldwell, (t17570914-33).

⁶⁴⁰ *OBP*, May 1795, trial of Helena Holman, (t17950520-57). Rebecca Short ‘cried and made a piece of work’ when she was searched, see *OBP*, September 1795, (t17950916-28).

pocket.⁶⁴¹ Another tactic might be seen in the statement of Samuel Starey who told the court that his servant Jane Edwards walked ‘rather slowly up stairs’ to her room when he requested that her box be searched.⁶⁴² Occasionally, resistance was expressed more overtly. Martha Dodds ‘threw down the keys’ to her box when her mistress requested to search it, and Ann Goldwell, when presented with three silver tea spoons that her mistress had found in her box, ‘snatch’d them out of my hand, and d-n’d me for a bitch, and said I had put them there, and threw them at me’.⁶⁴³ If these servants resisted the search, the fact that servants continued to hide stolen and illicitly acquired goods in their boxes, along with childbed linen, and even the lifeless bodies of their illegitimate babies, also suggests there was an assumption and expectation – however ill founded – that these goods would not be discovered. As Jennifer Melville has suggested, ‘simply because such private spaces were violated does not mean that they did not represent a place where individuals had an expectation of secrecy for their things’.⁶⁴⁴ We might add that simply because there was an expectation of accessibility at certain moments, this did not prevent the feelings of resentment, intrusion and unfair interference at other times.⁶⁴⁵

Conclusions

Whether hair trunks, wainscot chests, or a wooden ‘caravan’, servants’ boxes reveal important insights into the function and the meaning of the eighteenth-century domestic space for servants. The meaning of the box (like the function of a place) cannot be confined within the walls of the house. Material worlds were in motion in the eighteenth century; servants’ boxes were left at public houses and the register office, trunks were stacked onto carts and coaches, and transported between lodgings and places by servants and their friends and acquaintances. The place of servants

⁶⁴¹ *OBP*, July 1784, trial of John Hinxman, (t17840707-62); *OBP* December 1776, trial of William Colley, (t17761204-8).

⁶⁴² *OBP*, January 1787, trial of John Boot, Jane Edwards, (t17870110-11).

⁶⁴³ *OBP*, February 1790, trial of Martha Dodds, (t17900224-81); *OBP*, September 1757, trial of Ann Goldwell, (t17570914-33).

⁶⁴⁴ Melville, *Use and Organisation of Domestic Space*, p. 158.

⁶⁴⁵ Margaret Titcome, the mistress who claimed never to have searched her servant’s box, clearly understood that it was her *right* to do so, particularly as her maid had sought to flee the house ‘unknown’ to her. Titcome told the porter who had come to fetch the box that ‘he should not carry the box out without its being searched’. Ann Goldwell, her servant, disagreed, and replied: ‘I will not have it searched without the constable’, *OBP*, September 1795, trial of Ann Goldwell, (t17570914-53).

within the house was informed by a knowledge of (and anxiety about) their movement, and an acknowledgment of the transitory nature of their stay. A focus on the contents of the box, and its location, suggests that family members, friends, and past masters and mistresses facilitated the movement of servants around the capital, and served to watch-over their material possessions. The acquisition and storage of goods was one of the main functions of service, particularly for women, and the box played an important role in this. Although the contents of the box were understood in economic terms, as the 'fruits of labour and industry', in a world in which fiscal expedients remained heavily enmeshed with the material world and with 'credit', the box was also evidence of servants' character. In the case of female servants, the connection between the box and character was compounded through the association of it with clothing and with the body. The open box, filled with 'dirty' linen became a potent symbol of the sexuality of female servants, and of the boundaries within the domestic space over which the male householders should not step. Although rarely depicted in visual images, the closed box, well-stocked and ordered, might also be understood to suggest the material care and discipline demanded of the domestic economy, and hint at the possibility of a successful trajectory out of service.⁶⁴⁶ The association of the box with ideas about the individual was also evident; not only were names and initials inscribed on the box itself, but personal connection was also suggested through decoration and contents. It was through the collection, storage and ordering of the box that servants ordered their own lives, and made sense of their place in the world. If a box was gifted from parents, contained wages earned through a series of different places, as well as gifts from past mistresses, and love tokens from admirers, it served to locate the servant not only at a point in the life cycle, but within a network of independent social relationships. It is clear that, within the household, the box represented a discrete sphere of ownership. The search of the box suggests the complex relationship between illicit secrecy and 'privacy'; although the court records reveal masters and mistresses breaking open their boxes, and rifling through their things, access to the box was not unrestricted. A carefully controlled searching protocol mapped out appropriate interaction, and servants clearly conceptualised it as a space apart, where they could store goods in safety and security.

⁶⁴⁶ On the locked drawer as a symbol of virginity see Retford, 'The Crown and Glory of a Woman', p. 475.

Chapter Four: Material Interactions

The domestic space was not constituted only of kitchens, garrets and boxes, but was also populated with a variety of material practices through which the ‘place’ of servants was negotiated, and through which we can understand the function and experience of the house for the servants who lived and worked within it. As Carolyn Steedman suggested in the conclusion of her *Labour's Lost* (which she titled ‘the needs of things’), it was partly through interaction with things that social difference was articulated, and servants’ sense of themselves as workers was expressed and understood. According to Steedman, it was through dusting, scouring, cleaning and chopping that servants encountered their betters and understood their place within the working class.⁶⁴⁷ This intimacy with things is important. As Steedman suggested, domestic servants:

knew all about... *things*... They knew their contours, and their crevices, the place that dirt collected in them; knew their interior spaces, and what was and was not seen of them; they knew cracked china and bent forks, the difference between the appearance of cleanliness and the back-and-forth movement of the human body with a rag that produced it in actuality; knew of burned wooden spoons, and how you might use one to get the worst off before you boiled the baby's clouts.⁶⁴⁸

This is not the typical approach to the material culture of the eighteenth-century domestic space. As was suggested in the introduction, the study of eighteenth-century material culture has tended to focus on the products of the consumer revolution.⁶⁴⁹ Commodities, consumerables and ‘props’ of polite sensibility have been recognised as central to supply and demand-led arguments about industrial and economic development, and the ‘modernisation’ of relations between people and things. This focus on acquisition has, however, concealed the multiple hands through which objects pass, and the type of everyday actions and material encounters suggested by Steedman. Although the work on gifting, inheritance and the second-hand market has complicated simplistic assumptions of material culture as conspicuous consumption, the focus has remained on acquisition by individuals – even if that individual is located more successfully within a materially-constituted

⁶⁴⁷ Steedman, *Labours Lost*, pp. 351-2.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 348, p. 350-354.

⁶⁴⁹ For the distinction between this scholarship and that of material culture in the United States see Styles and Vickery, ‘Introduction’, in their *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture*, esp. p. 21-22.

community and within a moral as well as monetary economy.⁶⁵⁰ This is not to suggest that the material knowledge gained by servants in place has been entirely neglected; as was suggested in the introduction, their proximity to the ‘fineries’ of the age (and particularly to the dress of their mistresses) has long been acknowledged, and is typically understood through the framework of ‘emulative’ consumption.⁶⁵¹ Recent scholarship has done much to shift the focus of discussion from purchase to practice, and an understanding of the material world as the consumption of commodities towards what might be called a ‘post-consumption’ approach to material culture.⁶⁵²

The concept of ‘material interaction’ coined by the sociologist Tim Dant has been useful for framing the research for this chapter.⁶⁵³ Dant’s work explores the ways in which human actors establish ‘quasi-social’ relationship with objects. ‘[T]hings’ Dant suggests, have a ‘physical presence in the world...[and] are incorporated into social interaction and provide an embodiment of social structures reflecting back the nature and form of our social world’.⁶⁵⁴ Historians too have started to explore the roles that this type of ‘material interaction’ played in social relationships and ideas of selfhood. Kate Smith has argued that the genteel white (or gloved) hand be understood as part of an assemblage of material props used for the self-fashioning of eighteenth-century women. It is no longer simply the tea pot, or the tea-table that are recognised as symbols of meaning making and methods of identity formation, but the embodied practices which these objects demand.⁶⁵⁵ Mimi Hellman’s accounts of the bodily postures demanded of particular items of furniture similarly revealed the

⁶⁵⁰ See, for example, B. Lemire, ‘Consumerism in Pre-Industrial and Early Industrial England. The Trade in Second-Hand Clothes’, *JBS*, Vol. 27, No. 1, (1988), pp. 1-24; Vickery ‘Women and the World of Goods’; Styles, ‘Lodging at the Old Bailey’, pp. 61-80; L. Zionkowski (ed.), *The Culture of the Gift in Eighteenth-Century England*, (Basingstoke, 2009); J. Stobart and I. Van Damme, (eds), *Modernity and the Second-Hand Trade: European Consumption Cultures and Practices, 1700-1900*, (Basingstoke, 2010); I. K. Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving, Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge, 2011).

⁶⁵¹ As above, footnote 163, discussion pp. 50-51.

⁶⁵² For example see Vickery, ‘World of Goods’; Pennell, ‘Pots and Pans’; Harvey, *History and Material Culture*; Trentman, ‘Materiality in the Future of History’.

⁶⁵³ T. Dant, ‘The ‘Pragmatics’ of Material Interaction’, *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8:11 (2008), pp. 11- 33. Also see Dant, *Material Cultures in the Social World, Values, Activities, Lifestyles*, (Buckingham, 1999). My thanks to Kate Smith for drawing my attention to Dant’s work.

⁶⁵⁴ Dant, *Material Cultures in the Social World, Values*, p. 2.

⁶⁵⁵ Smith, ‘In Her Hands’ and Smith, ‘Sensing Design and Workmanship: The Haptic Skills of Shoppers in Eighteenth-Century London’, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 25, Issue 1, (2012), pp. 1-10.

meaningful interplay of object and individual.⁶⁵⁶ In these and other histories, object and human are brought together through ‘practice’, a practice which is understood not only to have social implications – the performance of genteel gendered identities, for example – but also an effect on the individual.⁶⁵⁷ If the practices recovered by these historians might be understood as genteel performances of material mastery, this chapter is concerned with a different, less visible, type of material interaction – that occasioned by servants’ work.

The fleeting material interactions between servant and the material culture of the domestic space rarely survive in the historical record. They are hidden behind what Roland Barthes has called the ‘obstacles of the obvious’, the kind of taken-for-granted engagement with things that is rarely deemed worthy of record.⁶⁵⁸ If recent scholarship has worked backwards from extant objects, reading into the material the engagement demanded by it, this too is problematic for the goods which dominated servants’ lives. Pillow cases, boiling coppers, cotton stockings, chamber pots, table cloths and tea kettles are not typically the stuff of posterity, they are easily discarded and, as such, rarely survive in museum collections. Those that do tend to have been collected along connoisseurial criteria of ‘design’ or ‘maker’ and not as representative examples of everyday material culture. Rather than an ‘object-centred’ approach, this chapter is based, instead, on a sample of statements where witnesses appeared at court to ‘swear to’ property confiscated from, or abandoned by, a suspected thief. This act of swearing sometimes took place in front of a constable or magistrate prior to trial and was noted in the course of the *Proceedings*. On other occasions, the property was brought to court and different members of the household were brought to ‘swear’ to the item in the presence of the jury. Through this act, knowledge of particular domestic items by different members of the household was recorded. Although many of these statements record only that the item was produced and deposited to by a particular individual, many include more detailed information. In the attempt to prove their own knowledge of the item produced at court, witnesses typically offered an account of their own engagement with that object. Although for

⁶⁵⁶ Hellman, ‘Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure’.

⁶⁵⁷ Also see Adamson, ‘The Case of the Missing Footstool’; A. Withey, *Transforming the Body: Technology, Self-Fashioning and Politeness in the Eighteenth Century*, (Basingstoke, 2015).

⁶⁵⁸ R. Barthes, *The Semiotic Challenge*, 1964, (Oxford, 1983), p. 184. This is cited in Dant, ‘Pragmatics of Material Interactions’, p. 29.

Steedman, it was in these material interactions that servants' identities as 'workers' were experienced, by focusing on such material interaction and not on labour or work done, we can sidestep the difficulty of understanding service as an 'occupation', and engage with it on its own terms, as a period of training, and as a schooling in appropriate material behaviour and participation in the domestic economy.⁶⁵⁹ I am interested here not only to chart what servants were doing within the house, and how that activity might be understood, but the ways in which those domestic practices might add to our understanding of eighteenth-century material culture. Typically associated with ideas of gentility, politeness, manners and taste, this chapter broadens the focus to include work, labour and domestic economy.

There are two basic insights offered by these records. Firstly, the identifications sketch- out which objects different members of the household were familiar with, and responsible for. Particular items loomed large in the imaginations and memories of some members of the household, and shaded into the background in the minds of others. It was not simply that the household was constituted of different material assemblages, over which different members took responsibility, however, but that engagement with objects varied from person to person. Whereas lists, inventories and account books are generally authored by one individual, and typically offer a static understanding of material goods (usually as the 'property' of the male householder), the *Proceedings* record a multi-authored performance and offer a different perspective through which to understand domestic material culture. If the gendered knowledge of domestic goods is now a commonplace of historical literature, these statements serve to map material interaction along different criteria and complicate assumptions about the material culture of the domestic space as neatly divided between the conjugal couple. If the domestic is typically rendered as a series of negotiations between husband and wife, these records add servants to the mix.

These records have clear limitations. Although, as we have seen, the *Proceedings* encompass a wider range of voices than many eighteenth-century texts, they contain

⁶⁵⁹For criticism of approaches which rely on occupational labels as evidence of 'work' or economic contribution see S. Olgilvie, *A Bitter Living: Women, Markets, and Social Capital in Early-Modern Germany*, (Oxford, 2003), R. Fiebranz, E. Lindberg, J. Linström and M. Ågren, 'Making Verbs Count: the Research Project 'Gender and Work' and its Methodology', *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, Vol. 59, Issue 3, (2011), pp. 273-293, Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*.

an inevitable social bias.⁶⁶⁰ In an initial sample of all theft cases in the first Sessions of each decade from 1750-1800, male witnesses predominated; 120 of the 158 individuals, or 76% of those who appeared to identify goods were men. This masculine bias is partly a reflection of the location of criminal action; public houses, street spaces and other sites associated with masculine activity predominate in the record. The law also privileged the statements of male householders as property owners; coverture dictated that it was the man of the house who was the legal owner of familial property and it was, therefore, he and not other members of his household who tended to appear before the court and prosecute for theft.⁶⁶¹ It is a striking feature of the sample that many of the female householders who appeared at court to identify items were either unmarried or widowed and were, therefore, independently responsible for the property stolen from them.⁶⁶² Although the legal system favoured the word of the male householder, servants were frequently called as witnesses in cases of the theft of their employer's goods. If, as recent estimates have suggested, servants constituted around one thirteenth (around 8%) of the metropolitan population, they were overrepresented as witnesses to stolen goods. Thirty (or 20%) of the 158 witnesses in the initial sample either identified themselves as a servant or were identified as such by another witness at court. This proportion suggests that appearing at court may well have been an important part of servants' roles, something that registered their responsibility over the goods in their care. The gendered bias of the initial sample is repeated amongst servants; twenty two of the thirty servant witnesses in the initial sample (or 69%) were male. Again this appears to have reflected the location of criminal action; male servants identified goods stolen from the shops and warehouses, fields and yards, as well as those taken whilst on errands for their masters and mistresses across the metropolis. Female servants, on the other hand, were typically called to identify goods that were stolen from inside the house, although they too identified goods stolen from shops and other non-traditional domestic spaces such as public houses -as we will see. Although the initial sample revealed the distribution of material knowledge according to household position, a larger sample of the statements made by individuals identifiable as

⁶⁶⁰ See J. Brewer and J. Styles, *An Ungovernable People: English and Their Laws in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, (New Brunswick, 1980), esp. p. 20.

⁶⁶¹ On coverture see A. Erickson, 'Coverture and Capitalism', *HWJ*, Issue 59, (2005), pp.1-16.

⁶⁶² On the strengthening of property law against servants and women see S. Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property in England, 1660-1833*, (Massachusetts, 1990).

servants was taken to focus more closely on servants' relationship with domestic goods. The larger sample, gathered during the course of the research for this thesis and therefore focused on domestic spaces, unsurprisingly reverses the gender bias of the initial sample. This larger sample includes 97 examples of male servants identifying goods belonging to a member of their household, and 228 examples of female servants doing the same.⁶⁶³

Table 2. Individuals who appeared to identify goods in the first sessions of each decade 1750-1800.

| | Servants | Non-servants | Unknown | Total |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Male | 22 | 81 | 17 | 120 |
| Female | 8 | 29 | 1 | 38 |
| Unknown | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 30 | 110 | 18 | 158 |

These statements do not recall the totality of interactions, real or imagined, between servants and the domestic objects with which they came into contact. Not only were these actions expressed in words, which, as many scholars have suggested, have a slippery relationship with things, but these statements record a performance at court shaped by the legal expectations of the case as well as the social identity of the witness.⁶⁶⁴ The fiction in the archives, the socially-constructed ways in which narratives were crafted at court has been acknowledged since Natalie Zemon Davis' influential reading of sixteenth-century pardon tales.⁶⁶⁵ The court context suggests that witnesses appealed to a type of knowledge that would best strengthen the testimony and bolster the claim to ownership, but also to a type of material knowledge that was deemed legitimate, appropriate and believable by those who heard the statement at court, and later read about the trial in the course of the *Proceedings*. These statements offer access to the material encounters of servants unencumbered by the narratives of emulative consumption and criminal conspiracy which have dominated our understanding of servant engagement with eighteenth-

⁶⁶³ See appendix 5a and 5b.

⁶⁶⁴ For an example of the difficult relationship between people and things see L. Auslander, 'Beyond Words', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 110, No. 4, (2005), pp. 1021-1022.

⁶⁶⁵ N. Z. Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Parson Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France*, 1987 (Cambridge, 1988).

century material culture. It is the process of identification of stolen goods that makes these material interactions visible to the historian; it is the criminal act that rescues these practices from the 'obstacles of the obvious'. Because of this, our knowledge is limited to those objects which it was possible or desirable to steal. Small goods of relatively high value appeared frequently at court, whereas fixed goods and large pieces of furniture (which were presumably more difficult to steal) are conspicuously absent. We can assume that servants would have been familiar with the floorboards they scrubbed, the cupboards and bureaux they stocked, locked and 'rubbed', and the chamber pots they emptied, but, rarely stolen, these objects do not appear as part of the material interactions explored here.⁶⁶⁶ The categorisation of the objects they did identify is difficult. This is not simply because meanings migrated as objects moved through their lifecycles, but because very little of this contextual information is readily available in the records of the court. There are, however, three main categories of objects which servants were brought to court to identify, and which reveal important aspects of servants' material experiences.

Stock in trade

The first category of goods identified by servants might be understood as the stock-in-trade of the houses in which they served. This category is defined by the place of the object in the market place as much as the function or purpose of the object itself. The meaning of a linen shirt is clearly different when taken from the counter of a shop than when stolen from a washing tub in a yard, and the meaning and value of that knowledge differed accordingly. The categorisation of such goods is most obvious when items were stolen from shops, warehouses or from carts and containers traversing the city streets. This category includes perishable foodstuffs like the tea, butter and coffee identified by servants to grocers, waggoners and merchants, saleable textiles like the yards of cotton, fustian and linen and measures of ribbon and lace identified by the servants of haberdashers, and a variety of other goods identified by the servants of other types of traders and shopkeepers. Stock-in-trade

⁶⁶⁶ On the difference between goods listed in inventories and those that appear at court see Helmreich, Hitchcock and Turkel, 'Rethinking Inventories', esp. pp. 6-8.

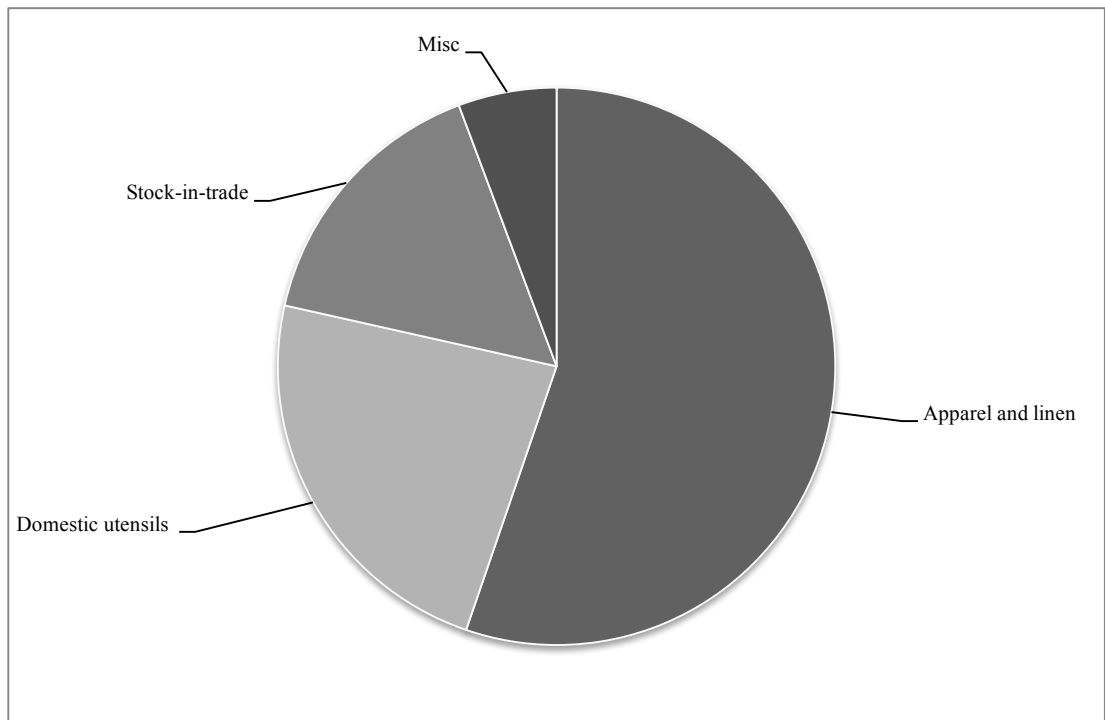


Fig. 23. Chart to show stolen goods identified by female servants, 1750-1800.

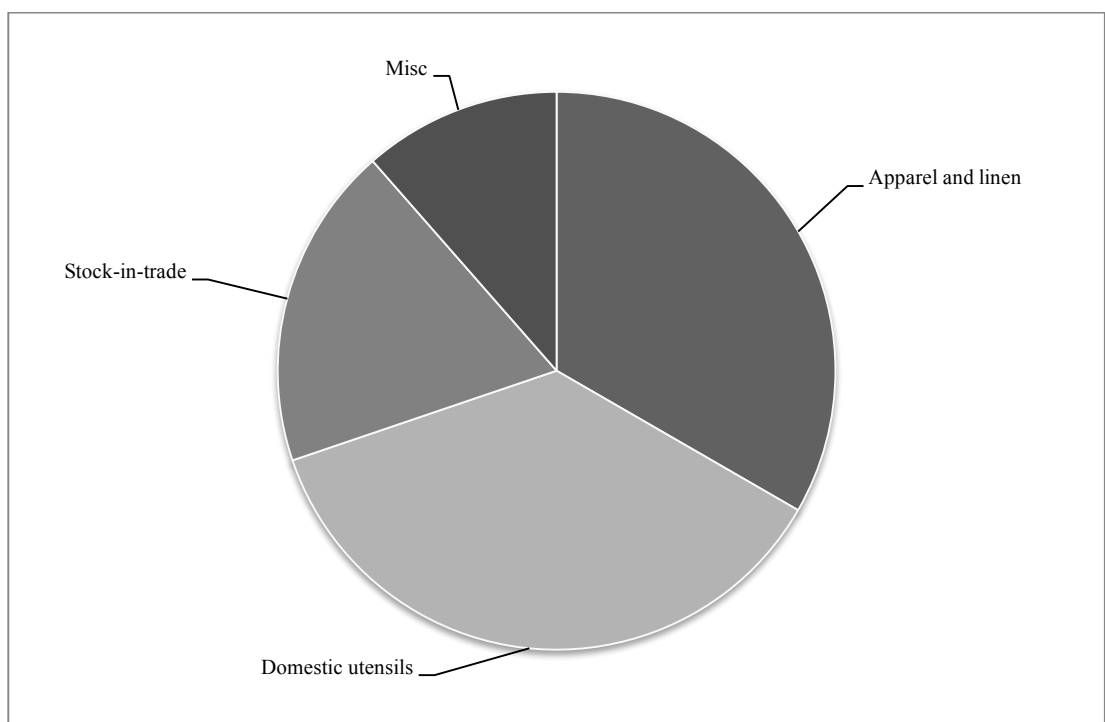


Fig. 24. Chart to show stolen goods identified by male servants, 1750-1800.

also included goods for sale or for use in production like the building materials and tools that were prime targets for thieves in the expanding metropolis and were commonly identified by the servants of labourers, glassworkers and builders. It also includes livestock sold for meat or profit or kept for production for market, although the line between domestic provision and production for the market is particularly unclear in this case.⁶⁶⁷ I have also included in this category the cups, plates, mugs and other utensils on which the business of coffee shops, public and victualling houses depended.⁶⁶⁸ The variety of stock-in-trade identified by servants is significant, and suggests the many ways in which the economic life of the capital depended on the labour of servants. Many of the items which were identified by servants which I have classified as stock-in-trade were not substantially different from those found within a traditionally 'domestic' setting, a fact which not only reiterates the close connection between the residence and the business in this period, but suggests the potentially transferable nature of material knowledge learnt in service, and the marketable possibilities of such material skill.

Despite Adam Smith's assumptions about servants' work as non-work, it is clear from the statements that many servants remained intimately involved with the 'productive' labour of the household. In small trading households, the role of servants blurred with that of shopmen and women. This was particularly the case for male servants who are often indistinguishable from shopmen and traditionally-bound apprentices in the records of the court. These servants displayed a type of knowledge which was typically performed by their masters and (less usually) their mistresses in identifying their stock-in-trade, and might be understood as broadly artisanal.⁶⁶⁹ Male servants who appeared at court to identify stock stolen from shops and warehouses tended to identify items by pointing out their master's mark on the property as well as their own labour either in the production of the item, or in the serving of the customer. Although the mark branded items as the property and product of their master or mistress, these servants recognised their own labour within it. Joshua Kentish, for example, who was a servant to a haberdasher, identified the

⁶⁶⁷ Whittle, 'The House as a Place of Work', esp. p. 145.

⁶⁶⁸ See appendix 5a and 5b.

⁶⁶⁹ For female householders identifying stock see M. B. Norton, 'Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 33: No. 3, (1976), p. 393-4.

mark of his master on a packet of pins, but was keen to articulate his own labour in the making of the mark as well as the personally-held knowledge about the business that was suggested by it.⁶⁷⁰ While his master claimed only that he ‘found my mark’ on the packets of pins, Kentish explained that he had ‘marked these papers of pins myself. These letters tell us the price they cost. We sell them by these marks’. If for masters the mark was a marker of property, for Kentish it served as a reminder of his own labour and as an instruction, an indicator of the price he was to charge the customer.

For Mary Beth Norton, the basic distinction in gendered knowledge of material goods was between female knowledge as ‘wholly domestic’ and male knowledge as ‘encompassing property, finance and business’.⁶⁷¹ This was not the case for servants. Female servants also identified goods categorised as stock-in-trade, although they did so less frequently than male servants and in a narrower range of trades. In the sample of records examined here, the identification of stock-in-trade by female servants was limited to the clothing and victualling trades. Mary Smith, a female ‘servant of all work’, for example, was called to the constable’s office to identify a shirt stolen from her mistress’s clothes shop in December 1800. She told the constable:

I saw my mistress’s mark upon it, I would swear to it...it was a new-made shirt, quite new... [the mark] was No. 8; the selling price was eight shillings, which was put upon it, that I might know what to sell it for when my mistress was out of the way.⁶⁷²

For Mary Smith, like the male servants, the mark served as an instruction and as a recognition of her own work in the trade of the house. If these examples suggest the complexity of service relations at the end of the eighteenth century, and might be understood to reflect the slippage between a servant (as stated in the *Proceedings*) and a shopman or woman, the sample also suggests that the movement between domestic work and work in the shop was common. When Alice Newton, who was a servant to John Barnes who lived on the corner of Bow Street in Bloomsbury, claimed to ‘know every piece of cloth’ in her master’s shop, the court enquired: ‘Do

⁶⁷⁰ *OBP*, trial of Matthew Hebb, January 1770, (t17700117-8). For other examples of male servants identifying goods through marks see *OBP*, January 1760, trial of Patrick Nicholson, (t17600116-27); *OBP*, January 1790, trial of James Askin, (t17900113-27); *OBP*, January 1790, trial of James Askin, (t17900113-27); *OBP*, February 1792, trial of Robert Jones, (t17920215-42).

⁶⁷¹ Norton, ‘Eighteenth-Century American Women’, p. 409.

⁶⁷² *OBP*, December 1800, trial of Loduwick Dickman, (t18001203-35).

you ever serve in the shop?’ to which she replied, ‘yes, sometimes’.⁶⁷³ The problematic distinction between domestic work and the ‘business’ of the house is revealed in the ways in which servants became enmeshed in the market through their domestic labour. This appears most acutely in lodging, public and coffee houses where the work demanded of the servant (the washing of pots, the clearing of tables, the lighting of fires and candles, and the warming and making of beds) intersected with market forces and priorities. In households such as this it was probably the scale of labour — the number of beds to make, the number of pots to clean — rather than the nature of the task which shifted as labour moved from domestic to business priorities.⁶⁷⁴ Even when the work of servants was generally divorced from the trade and business of the house, it too might become enmeshed in the market. Extraordinary work commitments drew servants into the productive business of the household. For female servants this might have been particularly the case when the work of the house coincided with traditionally ‘feminine’ skills and those demanded of them in place, such as needlework and laundry, food provision, and childcare. When one master, a dress and ‘artificial flower’ maker, was asked by the court whether two girls employed by him as servants assisted in the business of the house, he replied: ‘one of them does; the other generally does not; however that day I did employ her in some of the work’.⁶⁷⁵ Another suggestive example of the type of participation of servant maids in the business of the house was also recorded at court. The servant Eleanor Watson appears to have been fulfilling her domestic duties when she rose from her seat in the parlour to answer the door of her master’s house on Kingsgate Street in Holborn one evening in 1797, but quickly became enmeshed in the business of the household through this labour. Watson told the court that:

I received two silk gowns and two silk petticoats from the servant of Mr. Jakes, who keeps the George-Inn in Holbourn. I carried them into the parlour to my mistress: she looked over them, and put them on the compters in the shop, till my master came in, because we thought they would not take the colour they were to be dyed. The shop was then shut up. I went into the parlour again, and sat down to my work with my mistress.⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷³ *OBP*, April 1785, trial of Thomas Simms, (t17850406-50). For other examples of female servants identifying shop goods see: *OBP*, January 1780, trial of Ann Marshall, (t17800112-26); *OBP*, October 1791, trial of Charles Crawley, (t17911026-27); *OBP*, October 1791, trial of Charles Crawley, (t17911026-27); *OBP*, January 1780, trial of Mary Bond (t17800112-26).

⁶⁷⁴ On this see Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p. 349-350.

⁶⁷⁵ *OBP*, July 1790, trial of Rhynewick Williams, (t17900708-1).

⁶⁷⁶ *OBP*, April 1779, trial of Esther Marklin Elizabeth Cox, (t17790404-14).

Watson's master was a silk dyer, and it is clear that the gowns she received at the door were part of the business of the house; her placement of them on the counter in the shop 'till her master came in' suggested his responsibility over the goods spatially, and acted as a material reminder for him to deal with the items on his return. Domestic and trade responsibilities were not, however, that clearly divided. Watson's statement goes on to reveal the interplay of knowledge, expertise and skill between a master and his wife, and a discussion about the productive labour of the household between a mistress and her servant. Watson suggested that the decision about the difficulty of the dye was made jointly between herself her mistress: 'we thought they could not take the colour they were to be dyed'. It is not clear how common this type of after-hours business dealing was in the metropolis, but the knock of the servant from the nearby public house was not the only interruption to Watson's work that evening. Half an hour – and another call at the door later – two women knocked to ask whether a coat and waistcoat that they had brought earlier on in the day had been cleaned. Rather than defer to her master's business knowledge, or request the assistance of her mistress, Watson dealt directly with this enquiry. In the absence of her master, and with her mistress at work in the parlour, Watson becomes a type of out-of-hours shop girl. Her experience and knowledge of these business dealings were demonstrated clearly at court. She told the court:

I desired them to walk in; I told them I believed they were cleaned, and went into the shop to look for them; there are two compters in the shop, I looked on one, but could not find them...I found they came to eighteen pence; she gave me a bad shilling...As soon as we had settled, I asked if she would have the things put in her handkerchief.⁶⁷⁷

If the male 'servants' that appeared before the court may well have been shopmen, clerks or apprentices, the tasks that they performed in the shops, warehouses and streets of the metropolis might also be expected from male servants, 'lads' and 'boys' employed to run errands and wait at table. Female servants too were intimately involved in the business of many small households; either actively assisting in the shop, 'minding' it in the absence of their masters and mistresses, or participating, as Watson did, in the running of the business. This type of domestic multitasking appears common, and may have created a broad material knowledge-base and skill set which might be exploited and made use of later on in life.

⁶⁷⁷ *OBP*, April 1779, trial of Esther Marklin Elizabeth Cox, (t17790404-14).

‘Assiduity, care, cleanliness and industry’: the business of the house

If the material encounters with items related to the stock-in-trade of the house reveal the integration of servants’ work in the metropolitan economy, the two remaining object categories reflect the important role of servants in the maintenance of the changing material environment of the domestic space. The second category of goods identified by servants at court, and by far the most numerous, was ‘apparel and linen’. This category encompassed not only clothing and accessories like shoes, buckles, watches and rings, but also domestic textiles like table cloths, napkins, curtains, and bed sheets, as well as other textiles such as cottons, linens, lace and ribbon assumed to be for domestic consumption. The final category, ‘domestic utensils’, includes the everyday objects and tools associated with food production and provision, as well as the silver, pewter, and china typically associated with genteel performance at table and polite sociability. The material encounters revealed in these statements offer an insight into the tasks demanded of servants within the household, and demonstrate the importance of servants in the maintenance of the domestic space and its economy. This is an attempt to ‘read’ the material culture of the domestic space through the eyes (and perhaps more accurately the hands) of servants.

Although as we have seen, a distinction between productive labour and domestic work was difficult to uphold in the eighteenth century, the domestic work demanded of servants was changing.⁶⁷⁸ If many households continued to act as spaces of business and ‘work’, new ideas of domesticity, changing standards of material ‘comfort’ and cleanliness, and the slow (but far from inevitable) separation of the residential unit from places of productive labour demanded new forms of domestic work.⁶⁷⁹ If, as was suggested in the introduction, a transition from a ‘Golden Age’ of servant participation in a capaciously defined (and well-respected) ‘housewifery’ to the drudgery of ‘housework’ has been overstated, there was clearly a shift in the demands made of servants within the house. Although this change is typically related

⁶⁷⁸ Whittle, ‘Housewives and Servants’; Whittle, ‘The House as a Place of Work’; B. Caddick, *The Material Culture of the Household: Consumption and the Domestic Economy in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD thesis, University of Wolverhampton, (2010), esp. pp. 144- 178.

⁶⁷⁹ On comfort Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort*. On cleanliness see K. Brown, *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America*, (New Haven and London, 2009) and Cockayne, *Hubbub*.

to the slow transition from (semi) self-sufficient households to the integrated specialised economies of the metropolis, nation, and expanding global trading networks, much can also be read from the changing demands of domestic objects themselves. As several scholars have suggested, objects were important social actors in the eighteenth century and demanded new performances of ease and elegance on behalf of their owners; they also demanded new types of work to keep them in order. Although recent scholarship has questioned the extent to which mistresses withdrew from active participation in the work of the house, it was clearly servants (and particularly female servants) who bore the brunt of this labour. The dramatic changes in the material culture of the household, and the implications of it for the servants who lived and worked within it, have been suggested by a number of scholars. Bridget Hill tied the changing material properties of the domestic space to the ‘feminisation’ of service as the eighteenth century advanced. By the eighteenth century, Hill suggested:

Homes were more commodious... All family rooms had to have individual fireplaces, their own washstands with bowl and water-jug. There were new standards of furnishing – more furniture, curtains, carpets, hangings, pictures on the wall, brass and silver, ornaments. All these changes created new work, whether brushing cleaning, washing, polishing, or dusting, the carrying of coals to upstairs rooms and laying of fires, supplying bedrooms with hot water in the morning and subsequent removal of slops.⁶⁸⁰

Contemporary writers too were clear of the necessities of labour demanded by the proliferation of ‘stuff’ in the eighteenth century. Visitors to London regularly commented on the perpetual cycle of daily chores which marked Londoners out from their neighbours on the continent and from their countrymen and women, and linked the ‘cleanliness’ of the capital to this material proliferation as well as the ‘dirt’ of the coal fires that powered the industrial and domestic life of the metropolis.⁶⁸¹ As early as 1700, the English writer Timothy Nourse complained of the burning of sea coal as ‘one great Nuisance which sullies all the Beauties of this City, being such as may be seen, felt, smelt, and tasted at some Miles distance, so obvious is it to all our Senses’. So ‘Corroding’ was this smoke, according to Nourse, that houses were ‘sullied’ by its touch:

⁶⁸⁰ Hill, *Women, Work, and Sexual Politics*, p. 127. For criticism of feminisation see Meldrum, *Domestic Service*.

⁶⁸¹ Saussure, *A Foreign View of England*, pp. 157.

Bars and Casements of Windows, the Balconeys, with all sorts of Iron-work, which though never so well Oil'd and Polish'd, will in a few Years become Eaten and Mouldring with Rust, and must after a short Time be renew'd to become fresh Fuel for this all devouring Smoak.

It was not only the domestic exterior that suffered through contact from the smoke that billowed from the city's chimneys, but the material culture of the house. Nourse described the material ruination engendered by this smoke in detail:

Twere endless to reckon up all the Mischiefs which Houses suffer hereby in their Furniture, their Plate, their Brass and Pewter, their Glass, with whatsoever is solid and refin'd, all which are Corroded by it. . . All sorts of Hangings, especially Tapestry, are in a few Years totally defil'd by it, losing their Beauty, and stinking richly into the Bargain, as many be seen or smelt, rather in all the Hangings almost of Ordinary Houses: Hence it is that of latter Years they choose rather to make use of Wainscot to line their Walls with, though this too is quickly found to loose its Beauty. All Gildings, Pictures, Utensils; in a Word, all manner of Furniture whatsoever, though never so great Care be us'd, do suffer extreamly by this Tartanous Smoak.⁶⁸²

If Nourse lamented the inevitable decline, ruination and replacement of the household's furniture, and 'all the Mischiefs which Houses suffer', later writers commented on the sustained efforts of 'cleanliness' required to keep the 'tartanous smoak' at bay. Although Pierre Jean Grosley (another Frenchman) remarked on the sooty cloud which hung in the skies above London in 1772, he also noted the extraordinary effort that went into preventing its infiltration into the domestic space and the ruination of its objects. Grosley commented that:

The humid and dark air which enwraps London, requires the greatest cleanliness imaginable; and in this respect, the inhabitants of that city seem to vie with this Hollanders. The plate, hearth-stones, moveables, apartments, doors, stairs, the very street-doors, their locks, and the large brass knockers, are every day washed, scoured, or rubbed.⁶⁸³

For Grosley, the obsessive 'cleanliness' of the English was necessitated by their material excesses: 'what is an article of necessity in England, is mere extravagance in France', he stated, and outlined the many ways in which the increasingly decorative interiors of English homes demanded more complex cleaning processes.⁶⁸⁴ Although Grosley claimed to be 'free from all national antipathy', he ridiculed the circularity

⁶⁸² T. Nourse, 'An Essay Upon the Fuel of London' in *Campania Foelix, Or, A Discourse of the Benefits and Improvements of Husbandry*, (London, 1700), p. 349, p. 350, p. 351.

⁶⁸³ P. J. Grosley, *A Tour to London; Or, New Observations on England, and its Inhabitants. Translated from the French by Thomas Nugent in two volumes*, (London, 1772, vol. 1), p. 72-73.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

of the acquisition of material goods by the English.⁶⁸⁵ It was material ‘luxuries’ which generated the necessity of continual cleaning, which demanded the constant burning of fires to ‘defend...against humidity’ - the very burning of which contributed to the dirt to be cleaned. It was clear to Grosley that the increase of labour demanded as domestic material culture multiplied landed squarely on the shoulders of servants. He stated explicitly that ‘The neatness of the Londoners in their apartments, and in every article of furniture requires great care in the servants’.⁶⁸⁶ Indeed, it was the ‘assiduity, the care, the cleanliness, and the industry, which the English require in their servants, [that] fix the value of their wages; that is to say, their wages are very considerable’.⁶⁸⁷ The assiduity, care, cleanliness and industry demanded of servants is erased in traditional histories of work and the domestic space, yet evidence of such attention survives in the records of the court.

Apparel and linens

The assiduity, care, cleanliness and industry with which servants encountered material goods was displayed through the manner in which they identified clothing and textiles. The majority of servants (particularly of female servants) identified clothing and textiles belonging to the household. In this, female servants performed the type of feminine knowledge and responsibility identified by a number of scholars.⁶⁸⁸ Although it was men who were responsible for the majority of court cases, wives and female servants played a vital role in the identification of a variety of goods that appeared before the court. A few examples will suffice to demonstrate this point. When John Roberts appeared before the court in January 1800, he relied on his wife’s knowledge of a variety of linen to restore the stolen goods to the household. He stated at court ‘I went to the office on Monday, but I could not given a proper account of the things... the next day my wife went with me, and she swore to them’.⁶⁸⁹ Nicholas Alstrom who kept the Star Public House in Meeting House Alley in Wapping also revealed his material illiteracy whilst attempting to claim a sheet which had appeared in a nearby pawnbroker’s shop in September 1750. Like

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72-73, p. 74.

⁶⁸⁸ See, for example, Vickery, ‘The World of Goods’; Vickery, *Gentleman’s Daughter*, esp. pp. 155 - 158; Berg, ‘Women’s Consumption’.

⁶⁸⁹ *OBP*, January 1800, trial of Isaac Hart, James Smith, Elizabeth Smith, Ann Pummel, (t18000115-35). For another example of a husband deferring to his wife see *OBP*, April 1755, trial of Jane Linch, (t17550409-7).

Roberts, Alstrom too relied on his wife's knowledge of the item in question. He told the court: 'I looked at the sheet which the pawnbroker shewed me, he asked me if it was my property...but I could not swear to it till I had been home to my wife with it'.⁶⁹⁰ The ignorance of these men not only suggests the significance of the gendered realms of material knowledge that operated within the domestic space, but also the reliance of men on female members of the household.

Servant maids too were indispensable to the male householders who appeared before the court. Female servants appear to have been acceptable substitutes for wifely knowledge, and frequently appeared when household clothing, linen or textiles were stolen from the household. When Brian Bird, who was a baker, lost a variety of clothing and linen from his house on Carter Street in Bethnal Green, it was his servant Sarah Denham who appeared at court to identify the goods. Bird himself told the court that 'the servant maid can give a better account of the particulars'.⁶⁹¹

Servant maids were specifically sought out for this type of domestic knowledge. Esther Woolen, for example, was sent from her mistress's country house at Eltham to town 'to Mr. Fielding's, to see the linen, being *used* to it'.⁶⁹² Elizabeth Sibley too, who was servant to Martha Maria Hervey (the daughter of a Westminster MP, and widow of the reverend Charles Hervey), was questioned about the value of a towel by the court because of her acknowledged power of assessment over such items. The court told her 'you *are a judge* of it; you belong to the kitchen'.⁶⁹³ The variety of goods over which a female servant might come into contact was evident at court. Female servants identified not only garments of woollen and linen cloth, but those of fashionable cottons, silks, and damask. They were intimately familiar not only with stockings, aprons, petticoats, and handkerchiefs, but also with fashionable silk sacks, embroidered petticoats, and silver shoe buckles. Their knowledge was not limited only to 'feminine' garments, however. Female servants also appeared to identify a variety of stocks, shirts, breeches and other items belonging to their masters, and an assortment of apparel belonging to children, lodgers and other residents in the house in which they served. Female servants were also frequently brought to court when

⁶⁹⁰ *OBP*, January 1800, trial of Peter Asterbawd, Andrew Forsman, (t18000115-12). For other examples see *OBP*, December 1787, trial of William Watson, William Higgins, George Todd, William Brown, (t17871212-74); *OBP*, September 1791, trial of Ann Thomas, (t17910914-56).

⁶⁹¹ *OBP*, September 1750, trial of George Taylor, George Loyd, otherwise Moses, (t17500912-67).

⁶⁹² *OBP*, January 1758, trial of Elizabeth Ross, (t17580113-23). My emphasis.

⁶⁹³ *OBP*, June 1788, trial of Thomas Twite, (t17880625-78). My emphasis.

domestic textiles such as sheets, pillow cases, quilts, table cloths, curtains, and textiles such as linen, cotton, silk, ribbon and lace were stolen from the household. Female servant maids, it appears, were deemed a ‘judge’ of such items.⁶⁹⁴

This is not to say that male servants were not familiar with the clothing and linen belonging to their masters and mistresses, but that this knowledge was built on different domestic practices and material encounters than their female counterparts, and that it was therefore expressed in different terms. James Parker identified himself as a waiter at a coffee house in Aldermanbury near Guildhall, but clearly helped out with domestic activities. He appeared at court in January 1790 to identify a linen shirt that belonged to a lodger in his master’s house. Parker stated for the court that ‘I know this shirt to be Mr Robinson’s; I looked over his linen when I sent it to wash; this is marked A.R’.⁶⁹⁵ Although Parker acknowledged an intimate knowledge of the shirt through his involvement in the wash, he expressed this knowledge through the distancing sense of sight; he stated only that he ‘looked over’ this shirt. Likewise, although Jacob Grimes, who was a servant to a merchant, appeared at court when his master’s cap, sash and jacket went missing from a trunk strapped to the back of the curricule he was driving, he was not himself familiar with these goods. He told the court: ‘I did not miss the property till I came facing Moorfields, and then I found the trunk was cut off from behind; I do not know what was in the trunk, it had a patent strap belt round it’.⁶⁹⁶ The distance from the wash – and therefore from items of clothing and linen belonging to other members of the household – was a common feature of the statements of men. It is quite clear that although male servants might have helped pack clothing to wash, or transport it to laundries and to washerwomen, they did not themselves participate in the act of washing. A rare example of a servant washing his own clothes suggests that this was a shameful act, a response to abject poverty as well as unusual personal experience. John Loppenburg had come to England as a servant to Esquire Burrand who had served in the Russian army. Loppenburg recalled for the court that he ‘went out that Monday in order to wash a coarse dirty Shirt; I was ashamed to be seen doing it by any body, because it was torn and ragged. I went to one Pond, and saw People there, so I went to another’.⁶⁹⁷ Once

⁶⁹⁴ See appendix 5b.

⁶⁹⁵ *OBP*, January 1790, trial of Mary Dobson, (t17900113-28).

⁶⁹⁶ *OBP*, January 1800, trial of Joseph Broadbent, Thomas White, (t18000115-19).

⁶⁹⁷ *OBP*, October 1740, trial of John Loppenburg (t17401015-66).

he had washed the shirt and was waiting for it dry, two men approached, and he 'threw the Shirt from me lest they should laugh at me'. The men's laughter and Loppenberg's shame was constructed as a reaction to the torn and ragged shirt, but was also related to the act of washing. So unusual was the idea of a man washing his own shirt that a witness felt compelled to explain that 'he has washed his Linnen often himself and used to wash his Master's, when in the Russian camp'.⁶⁹⁸ The masculine military context was needed in order to explain the action.

In much grander establishments male servants took responsibility for a variety of valuable textiles – particularly in the absence of female servants. Germaine Le Court, the house steward to the Earl of Buckingham and Bartholomew Pausin his *valet de chambre*, for example, appeared at court in 1770 and identified a variety of expensive textiles including velvet, gold tissue and yards of printed cotton which had been taken from their master's store cupboard at Blickling Hall. Responsible for the security of the house and its property whilst the family were absent, these two men took responsibility for the prosecution of the theft; they travelled to London to pursue the thief, searched his box, and brought the case against him - and did so without the assistance of the female servants.⁶⁹⁹ Male servants in larger households also acquired in an-depth knowledge of the clothing belonging to their masters and the male members of the household through their roles in dressing them, and caring for their wardrobes. Edward Snowball, who served in the house of William East in 1755, identified a variety of men's apparel that went missing from his master's house. He told the court he was certain of the ownership of a cloth coat and waistcoat belonging to his master's son for he had 'brush'd them before I went out of town; they are my young master's property'.⁷⁰⁰ The knowledge performed by these male servants was not dissimilar from that displayed by their masters about their own clothing. Although male householders were not generally able to identify clothing belonging to other members of the household, they were articulate about their own possessions. That men appeared before the court and identified stitches in the 'face' of their breeches, marks on their handkerchiefs, the design and makers of their watches, and the cut and material of their 'trowsers', reinforces the conclusions of recent work

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*,

⁶⁹⁹ *OBP*, January 1770, trial of Lewis Tainting, (t1770117-36).

⁷⁰⁰ *OBP*, December 1755, trial of Thomas Haskins, (t17551204-13).

which has demonstrated the importance of clothing in masculine modes of self-fashioning and identity formation.⁷⁰¹ The statements of male servants reveal their role in the maintenance of these masculine goods. John Chambers, servant to Primrose Thompson who left the country for the East Indies, for example, instantly recognised an expensive watch belonging to his late master. He stated: 'I knew it to be my master's watch; the maker's name on it was John Dingwall, No. 78. I have been at the maker's house with it'.⁷⁰²

These interactions with apparel and linen were clearly a product of servants' work within the house. If these material encounters partly marked out the status of servants as 'workers', they were clearly related to gendered norms and responsibilities. For female servants the ability to 'work well at... needle' and 'get up small linen' was an important part of their work and frequently appeared as a necessary qualification for positions advertised in newspapers.⁷⁰³ Although shop-bought cloth, tailor-made garments and an expanding trade in second-hand clothes meant that the household was no longer the primary site of production of clothing and linen, plain work continued to be an important marker of feminine duty and accomplishment.⁷⁰⁴ The statements of female householders demonstrated the ways in which this female labour provided for the domestic economy. The wife of a cheesemonger who lived on Gray's Inn Lane, for example, identified a child's skirt stolen from the household as her own work. She told the court 'I know it by being my own work; it was kept in a drawer...the value of it is about 18d'.⁷⁰⁵ Susannah Pope, a widow, identified her labour in a variety of linens stolen from the house in which she lodged: 'This bed furniture, and pillow case, are mine; they have my work upon them... They are all my property'.⁷⁰⁶ If the skill of the needle performed at leisure was an accomplishment of female gentility, a basic proficiency in sewing was acquired early on. Even girls in the care of the parish were taught how 'to sew, knit their own

⁷⁰¹ *OBP*, January 1790, trial of Mary Dobson, (t17900113-28). On clothing and masculinity see, for example, D. Kuchta, *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England, 1550-1850*, (London, 2002).

⁷⁰² *OBP*, January 1770, trial of John Cox, (t17700117-10).

⁷⁰³ See, for example: *Public Advertiser*, (London, March 13, 1756).

⁷⁰⁴ Elizabeth Shackleton 'revelled' in her ability to be useful to her family, Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 150 -1.

⁷⁰⁵ *OBP*, October 1791, trial of John Johnson, (t17911026-1).

⁷⁰⁶ *OBP*, January 1800, trial of Mary Miller, (t18000115-36). Also see *OBP*, January 1800, trial of Isaac Hart, James Smith, Elizabeth Smith, Ann Pummel, (t18000115-35).

Stockings, mark, make and mend their own Linen and Cloaths, and to do all sort of Plain Work'. This was done, according to the minutes of one parish vestry, that they might be 'good and useful Servants'.⁷⁰⁷ Young servant maids assisted in the basic material maintenance of domestic clothing and linen; they might mark, make and mend relatively simple and low value goods such as aprons, napkins and tablecloths.⁷⁰⁸ Something of this labour is revealed in the statements at court.

Elizabeth Walker claimed in 1755 that she knew an apron belonged to her mistress because she had made it herself. She stated 'I am servant to the prosecutor; I remember this apron (taking it in her hand) was among the things in the last wash at our house...It is my mistress's... I made the apron'. If the apron appears as a tangible (perhaps vendible) product of Walker's domestic work, other servants testified to the more routine maintenance demanded of domestic textiles. Elizabeth Bridgen was a maid of all work at a house on Newgate Street in 1784 and recognised a pair of white cotton stockings of her mistress's by her frequent mending of them. She told the court 'These are a pair of stockings of my mistress's which I have mended for her several times; they are marked No. 3. with black silk'. Later in the record Bridgen appeared again before the court and recognised a pair of small curtains in a similar way 'by sewing one of the loops'.⁷⁰⁹

More experienced servants also recognised their own work in items belonging to their masters and mistresses. Elizabeth Hutchenson was a chamber maid to the MP Bamber Gascoyn and performed an authoritative display of her material knowledge to the court. When a shirt belonging to her master was produced, Hutchenson pointed out the remnants of the mark, and identified her own work in the making of the garment. She told the jury 'Here is B.G. and a figure 14 on it, and my own work about that, that, is a piece on the side'. When asked by the court whether, as the mark had since been picked out, it was possible for her to know what it had said, she responded unequivocally 'The mark of the needle remains'. The material remnant of Hutchenson's work was clearly evident to this servant maid who went on to demonstrate her knowledge for the jury. The *Proceedings* recorded that Hutchenson

⁷⁰⁷ *True Briton*, (London, March 2, 1796).

⁷⁰⁸ For the hierarchy of tasks demanded of female servants see C. Hardyment, (ed), *The Housekeeping Book of Susanna Whatman*, 1776, (London, 2000).

⁷⁰⁹ *OBP*, July 1784, trial of Isabella Vere, (t17840707-76).

‘puts a pin to the place, the jury inspect it, and finds it visible’.⁷¹⁰ Armed, presumably, with a ‘huswife’ around her waist or in her pocket, the chamber maid offered quantifiable ‘proof’ of material ownership to the jury. The statement of Hester Hatch, servant to a Doctor of Divinity, was taken similarly seriously by the jury. Hatch appeared at court and stated that her master’s shirt had been marked:

With blue Coventry thread; that was the manner in which the Doctor’s linen was marked in progressive numbers; the number 5 was lost than night....this shirt is a plain shirt, very much like the Doctor’s shirts in the collar, the wristbands, and the make of the shirt wholly; it is not my own making; I really think it is one of his shirts; the I is marked with blue Coventry thread, and the mark that remains is the mark of blue.⁷¹¹

So credible was Hatch’s statement that when the members of the jury were handed the shirt, they agreed immediately with her. The *Proceedings* recorded ‘We can see No. 5; it is very plain; I.D. No. 5’. Although Hatch admitted the shirt was not of her own making, her statement, which dwells on the similarity of the collar, wristbands and ‘make of the shirt’, also speaks to her knowledge of garment production.

If this type of work overlapped with that of their mistresses, this was not the case for the other activity through which female servants identified clothing and linens – their washing of it. The female servants who appeared before the court frequently revealed their material encounters with domestic textiles gained through the act of washing. When asked to ‘prove’ that a cap and handkerchief belonged to her mistress, for example, Elizabeth Hall stated ‘I have had them in my hands often; I have washed and ironed them, and have not the least doubt about it’.⁷¹² Sarah Lemon too, an out of place servant who had nursed a woman during her lying in, stated that she had the ‘care and custody’ of a bundle of linen, and that she knew the articles contained within it ‘I know this shawl; I had just washed it, and hung it over the line’.⁷¹³ As histories of housework have suggested, it was the wash that was the first task typically given over to servants, or sent out to char or washerwomen.⁷¹⁴ The most genteel of mistresses had very little to do with the most laborious parts of the wash.

⁷¹⁰ *OBP*, October 1760, trial of John Hughes, (t17601022-16).

⁷¹¹ *OBP*, April 1787, trial of John Philipps, (t17870418-54).

⁷¹² *OBP*, February 1762, trial of Mary Sherman, (t17620224-4).

⁷¹³ *OBP*, January 1790, trial of John Cameron, (t17900113-29). For other examples see *OBP*, April 1789, trial of George Williams, (t17890422-60), *OBP*, July 1784, trial of Peter Sampson, Charles Allen, (t17840707-16).

⁷¹⁴ Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 45.

Miss Ann Hayes, who hoped to buy her way into what she called the ‘genteel line of business’ of a grocer made this distinction apparent in 1781. Although she was able to identify a handkerchief stolen from her by own work in ‘hemming’ the garment, she told the court ‘I never washed it myself, our servants washed it for me’.⁷¹⁵ Other mistresses took responsibility for the day-to-day laundering of small linens or delicate items. Isabella M’Gilleray, for example, who was the wife of a tailor, told the court she discovered a theft after she ‘went into the kitchen to wash some pocket handkerchiefs’.⁷¹⁶ Elsewhere, mistress and servant worked together on the wash, although their roles were clearly demarcated through this activity. The servant Mary Squire told the court that although it was her responsibility to wash the household linen, her mistress hung it out to dry.⁷¹⁷ Similarly, although Martha Davis carried a bundle of linen down to her kitchen to be washed one evening in 1786, she left it for the washerwoman and her maid to deal with in the morning ‘as usual’.⁷¹⁸ These domestic hierarchies were also at work amongst servants in larger establishment. It was not assumed by the court that the housekeeper Elizabeth Cowper (who was identified as ‘Mrs Cowper’) participated in the wash. She was asked whether she had ‘occasionally had the...linen pass through your hands?’ to which she replied ‘Yes, when the servants are out of town, I have washed the shirts’.⁷¹⁹

The low status of washing was informed by its association with hard labour. The fetching and boiling of water, the hauling of heavy loads of sopping linen, and the scrubbing, beating and wringing of the load was time-consuming and exhausting. The ‘drudgery’ of the wash is a common theme of eighteenth-century literature, and as contemporary depictions of the washerwoman’s muscular arms and recipes to soothe her bleeding, chapped hands suggest, the habitual performance of this task became embodied in those who undertook it – marking out those women who depended on such labour for their livelihoods. Understanding what participation in the wash meant to those women that performed it is a difficult task.⁷²⁰ The closest insight appears to be that offered by Mary Collier’s poem *The Woman’s Labour* which was published in 1739. The poem reveals something of the ways in which the

⁷¹⁵ *OBP*, December 1781, trial of James Turner, Mary Brewer, Ann Moore, (t17811205-55).

⁷¹⁶ *OBP*, December 1789, trial of Ann Phillips, (t17891209-80).

⁷¹⁷ *OBP*, December 1783, trial of Joseph Phipps, (t17831210-147).

⁷¹⁸ *OBP*, October 1786, trial of Richard Ferris, (t17861025-32).

⁷¹⁹ *OBP*, April 1787, John Phillips, (t17870418-54).

⁷²⁰ On the withdrawal of the mistress see footnote 183.

wash was understood by this washerwoman, and perhaps, by the servant who laboured by her side. The professionalisation of laundering over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries meant that the washerwoman was an increasingly common presence in the houses of those who washed ‘at home’.⁷²¹ The frequently with which householders also sent their linen ‘out’ to wash also appears to have been increasing, and may have freed servant maids from participation in the task. The fact householders advertised that ‘no washing was done at home’ surely suggests that this type work was avoided by servants where possible.⁷²² These domestic decisions clearly depended on circumstance. The sickness of the woman of the house (or, perhaps, of her servants) might require the employment of char or washerwoman or the temporary employment of a servant maid. Elsewhere the employment of domestic assistance was related to the amount of work that needed to be completed. Elizabeth Smith, for example, who usually sent her washing out of the house, brought in a washerwoman to assist her servant maid with a ‘great wash’ required by the household. The unusual nature of this task was marked by the servant herself who claimed ‘it was a remarkable day, it was our washing day, my mistress very seldom has a washerwoman’.⁷²³

The complex associations of the act of washing, and the variety of experiences of it are hinted at in Collier’s verse. The verse on the wash begins as the washerwoman arrives at her mistress’s house, and is let in by the servant maid ‘tir’d with Work the Day before’.⁷²⁴ In a manner that resembled many early-morning washing days in the metropolis and elsewhere, the washerwoman worked alongside the servant of the house whilst the rest of the household slept on upstairs. The choreography of domestic tasks not only served to separate householder from domestic labour, but suggests just how long the process of the wash might take. The verse reveals the variety of material interactions demanded by the wash.

But when from Wind and Weather we get in,
Briskly with Courage we our Work begin;
Heaps of fine Linen we before us view,
Whereon to lay our Strength and Patience too;

⁷²¹ P. Malcolmson, *English Laundresses: A Social History, 1850-1930*, (Urbana, 1986).

⁷²² See, for example, *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* (London, England, Friday, January 25, 1799), Issue 21890; *Morning Post and Gazetteer* (London, England, Saturday, November 23, 1799); *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* (London, England, Saturday, March 1, 1800), Issue 22233.

⁷²³ *OBP*, May 1786, trial of William Stone, (t17860531-85).

⁷²⁴ Collier, *The Woman’s Labour*, p. 12.

Cambricks and Muslins, which our Ladies wear,
 Laces and Edgings, costly, fine and rare,
 Which must be wash'd with utmost Skill and Care;
 With Holland Shirts, Ruffles and Fringes too,
 Fashions which our Fore-fathers never knew.
 For several Hours here we work and slave,
 Before we can one Glimpse of Day-light have;
 We labour hard before the Morning's past,
 Because we fear the Time runs on too fast.⁷²⁵

The poem clearly reveals the physical labour and toil involved in the wash. Collier unambiguously identified the wash as 'work', and suggested the 'strength' required of the washerwoman and the maid. The unremitting toil of the wash is also made apparent through the invocation of slavery, and of time running on too fast.⁷²⁶

Although washing was hard labour which marked out the subordinate status of these women, it also demanded skill, care and patience which are also evident in Collier's verse. Although typically understood as unskilled drudgery, Collier suggests the careful material assessments required of the act of washing. Collier, like the servant maids who appeared before the court, constructed herself as a judge of the 'Heaps of fine Linen' before her. The wash might be understood as a way through which female servant maids learned to assess and deal with particular materials, particularly when under the tutelage of the more experienced washerwoman. Something of this type of material assessment is revealed by washerwomen at court. Mary Sullivan, for example, identified a valuable linen sheet in 1799 through comparison with other goods over which she had had responsibility in the past. She told the court she was sure of the sheet for she had 'never washed a sheet of the size and quality for these seventeen years in England'.⁷²⁷

Washerwomen assumed responsibility over the goods in their care, and frequently appeared at court when goods were stolen from lines or tubs in their yards, or from baskets packed up waiting for delivery. This responsibility was also assumed when washerwomen, like Collier, went into households to perform the wash. Hannah Baynham was a washerwoman that appeared at court in 1794 and demonstrated not only her responsibility for the goods she washed, but also her material acumen.

⁷²⁵ Collier, *The Woman's Labour*, p. 13.

⁷²⁶ S. Swaminathan and A. Beach (eds), *Invoking Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century British Imagination*, (Abingden, 2013).

⁷²⁷ *OBP*, September 1799, trial of Sarah Roses, (t17990911-27). Also see *OBP*, October 1761, trial of Thomas Quin, (t17611021-31).

Baynham went to wash for the labourer Robert Huggins and his family in Hoxton and, as in Collier's poem, was assisted by Elizabeth Grace, the maidservant of the house. Grace told the court only that she 'left a basket of linen in the wash-house' and that it contained 'Some childrens pinbefore [sic], and some part were table linen'. Baynham, in contrast, displayed an in-depth account of the goods. She told the court:

I remember putting some pin clothes in the washhouse over night, there were eleven in the bill, and one I found in the morning, some stall clothes, what the butchers lay across the stalls, there were nine of them, and I found five in the morning at the lower end of the garden, there were some aprons, and I found two in the yard, among the stall clothes, there were some shifts belonging to the children, I don't know how many, there was a night gown, a cotton waistcoat, some night shirts, they are put down as shifts, there is collars on them like shirts, there were some table clothes, but I don't know how many there were of them, I look upon it they were made of cotton and some breakfast cloths, I think three...Several of them were marked M.K.E.⁷²⁸

Baynham's statement reiterates the interplay of domestic and trade priorities (the 'stall clothes' depended on by butchers and other market sellers appear to have been washed alongside the children's shifts and table cloths), as well as her own professional responsibilities over these goods. Baynham went as far as correcting the information recorded in the indictment; she told the court that what was lost was 'some night *shirts*' although 'they be put down as *shifts*, there is collars on them like shirts'.⁷²⁹ That those responsible for the wash were skilled at distinguishing distinct items of apparel is also evident in Collier's poem. The washerwoman clearly identifies (with more than a hint of disdain) the variety of sartorial styles available to householders in the mid-eighteenth century – the 'Holland Shirts, Ruffles and Fringes too, / Fashions which our Fore-fathers never knew'.⁷³⁰ Although the relationship between female servants and the clothing of their employers is typically conceived in terms of emulation of fashions 'above their station', it is here constructed as one of skilled labour, material appraisal and distinction.

⁷²⁸ *OBP*, January 1794, trial of Elizabeth Allen, Frances Smith, (t17940115-31).

⁷²⁹ *OBP*, January 1794, trial of Elizabeth Allen, Frances Smith, (t17940115-31). My emphasis.

⁷³⁰ Collier, *The Woman's Labour*, p. 13. Carolyn Steedman suggested that 'the laundry maid's tasks became more difficult in the later century, as diaper-weave cotton replaced linen clouts, or rags' for '[l]inen is amenable to stain removal by soaking in lye, or in stale urine, while cotton cloth requires rubbing, scrubbing, and best of all, boiling to loosen stains to the same degree', Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p. 343. On this also see Steedman, 'A Boiling Copper', pp. 59-60.

Although many of the girls that entered service were taught the rudiments of laundry work at their mother's knee (or by the parish overseers), the washing of the garments that appeared before the court of the Old Bailey (and that were recorded in the inventories) required new methods and techniques. It was the *difference* between the demands of washing done in a servant maid's family, and that required of her in place that was the focus of much domestic advice literature. Hannah Glasse's *The Servant's Directory*, for example, informed its readers:

The Laundry-maid needs but little Instruction, as she is generally brought up to it from her Youth: But what I have observed in my own Family, they are often deficient in regard to the Care of washing Chints, & getting Spots and Stains out of Linnen, making the Water fit and fine for washing, tho' ever so foul.⁷³¹

The increasingly complex process of laundering is evident in this text. Glasse told servants that although soaping linens overnight was a common cleansing method, they 'must not manage fine printed Cotton or Chint's' this way'.⁷³² Instead, these garments were to be washed separately, soaked in pump water only an hour before washing, wrung out, and washed in 'stong-clear Suds'. Christiana Awdry too advised that 'Chintz and printed linens are rinsed in spring water which the oftener done the whiter they will be. Put them into water starch with a little blue in it. Hand them in the shade to dry'.⁷³³ This method was clearly difficult to achieve in urban environments without ready access to spring water, and where the 'Tartanous Smoak' that hung above the metropolis clung to washing hung to dry in the yard.⁷³⁴ It was not only the material property of these garments, the dirty pump water and the city smoke that made cleansing more difficult, but the new types of dyes and decoration too. Much domestic advice was concerned with making sure that the vibrant colours of new printed cottons did not run and spoil in the wash. Glasse instructed servants maids that 'If there be any fine Colours, as blue, green, or yellow, don't sope them on any account, for that will take all the Colour out'. Sarah Phillips, another author of advice to servants, suggested that servants should use the 'oldest soap you can, for that which is new made not only spoils the colour of the linnen, but also does not go so far'.⁷³⁵ These authors advised a variety of cleansing methods,

⁷³¹ H. Glasse, *The Servant's Directory, Or House-Keeper's Companion*, (London, 1760), p. vi.

⁷³² *Ibid.*

⁷³³ Caddick, *The Material Culture of the Household*, p. 171- 172.

⁷³⁴ See, for example, Glasse, *The Servant's Directory*, p. 14, p. 46.

⁷³⁵ S. Phillips, *The Ladies Handmaid: Or, A Compleat System of Cookery*, (London, 1758), p. 470.

techniques and the ‘necessary’ tools and paraphernalia necessitated by the washing and finishing of new delicate materials and styles. Anne Barker, the author of *The Complete Servant Maid*, for example, advised her readers that ‘fine’ muslins, should be:

folded into four, and put into clean water, not very hot, otherwise they are apt to be yellow, and when you have strained the water through a fine cloth, take a piece of the finest soap, and beat it to a lather with a stick turned very smooth...Let them lay there till you have made a second lather in the same manner as the first, only that the water must be more hot than the first, but not boiling, otherwise it will injure them.⁷³⁶

The increasingly detailed domestic advice literature suggested that servants and washerwoman lacked the skills required to deal with new eighteenth-century materials and fashions; and that these material encounters demanded instruction and guidance from those who knew better. In Collier’s poem too, the mistress hijacks the material knowledge and skill performed by the washerwoman and her servant maid.⁷³⁷ The poem continues as ‘bright *sol* illuminates the skies’ and the rest of the household awakes:

Then comes our Mistress to us without fail,
And in her Hand, *perhaps*, a Mug of Ale
To cheer our Hearts, and also to inform
Herself, what Work is done that very Morn;
Lays her Commands upon us, that we mind
Her Linen well, nor *leave the Dirt behind*:
Not this alone, but also to take care
We don’t her Cambricks nor her Ruffles tear:
And *these* most strictly does of us require,
To save her Soap, and sparing be of Fire;
Tells us her Charge is great, nay furthermore,
Her Cloaths are fewer than the Time before.
Now we drive on, resol’d our Strength to try,
And what we can, we do most willingly;
Until with Heat and Work, ‘tis often known,
Not only Sweat, but Blood runs trickling down,
Our Wrists and Fingers; still our Work demands
The constant Action of our lab’ring Hands.

The inspection of the wash was an important part of the mistress’s domestic responsibility, and marked out her proper place at the apex of the female domestic

⁷³⁶ A. Barker, *The Complete Servant Maid: Or Young Woman’s Best Companion*, (London, 1770?), p. 26.

⁷³⁷ On the anxiety about the encroachment of servants into the mistress’ business see Vickery, *Gentleman’s Daughter*, esp. p. 158.

hierarchy. The mistress held ultimate responsibility over the household's clothing and linens and she expected diligence, and judicious material skill of her servants. According to Collier, the mistress checked not only on the progress of the wash -and hence on the industry of her servants, but on their skill – the washerwoman was instructed to 'mind' the linen well and 'take care' of the cambric and ruffles. The mistress also carefully monitored the domestic economy; the instruction to 'save her soap, and sparing be of Fire' was a common admonition of eighteenth-century domestic advice literature and reveals the value of the prudent servant maid to the domestic economy. The scrutiny of the mistress, thinly veiled behind a gesture of hospitality, appears to have been received by the washerwoman with contempt; the criticism inherent in the mistress's instruction is all the more galling for she accuses them not only of mishandling, but of stealing the goods in their care.⁷³⁸

The spectre of material neglect and the 'bad example' loomed large in the domestic advice literature. Hannah Glasse, for example, advised her servant readers that 'Linen badly wash'd, and ill got-up, never do any Service, there being neither Credit nor Pleasure in the Wear of it; besides it ruins the Linen intirely'.⁷³⁹ These garments, the centre of the consumer revolution in England and the networks of trade, finance, and global politics with which it was connected, are here beholden to the washerwoman and the servant maid. The acknowledged role of these garments in the self-fashioning of genteel and gendered identities is also indebted to the work of servant maids. The 'pleasure' of wearing the linen, and the social 'credit' attained by its performance were, according to this author, entirely dependent on the way they were gotten up. If it is recognised that there is some satisfaction to be gained in the application of a skill newly learned and acquired, an instinct of mastery which might compensate (at least initially) for the laborious nature of particular tasks, this literature consistently interrupted, undermined, and frustrated servants' application of their own material knowledge. Just as Collier's mistress appeared to undercut the washerwoman's professional knowledge, so too, this literature made clear that the servants' manipulation of the material world was done in ways regulated by their masters and mistresses, or their proxies in domestic advice literature.

⁷³⁸ Steedman, *Labour's Lost*, p. 344.

⁷³⁹ Glasse, *The Servant's Directory*, p. 45.

The material knowledge expressed by servants at court fulfilled a valuable function in restoring goods to their rightful owners. Yet the material encounters revealed here also had applications beyond the courtroom. Both washing and needlework existed on a continuum that included wage-labour at one end and familial duty at the other.⁷⁴⁰ Laborious and unpleasant as it may have been, these tasks might also have been understood as labours of love, and as a quasi-familial duty expected of the women of the house – until they could afford to outsource it.⁷⁴¹ These skills were also marketable. Taking in washing and going out to wash was a one of the major ‘strategies’ on which labouring women relied in times of economic hardship; washing was hard physical labour, but it was also an activity through which women could make shift.⁷⁴² Needlework too might be understood in this way, although real skill at the needle was generally assumed to insulate women from the indignities of servitude.⁷⁴³ Although the relationship between female servants and the clothing of their employers is typically conceived in terms of emulation of fashions ‘above their station’, the knowledge and skills acquired through this material interaction had other functions. In the statements before the court, the knowledge of female servants was governed not by jealous glances and acquisitive consumption, but by diligent labour and hard work. The identifications reveal the extent of servants’ participation in the management and maintenance of clothing and domestic textiles, and the gendered ways in which particular members of the household engaged with different goods.

Domestic utensils

If clothing and domestic textiles occupied a significant proportion of the goods identified by servants before the court, so too did domestic utensils. Maid servants identified a variety of items including pewter dishes and pots, silver table spoons, tea spoons, salts, stands, forks, pots, tea tongs and strainers, saucepans and punch ladles, china plates, cups, and basons, copper pots, pans, kettles and boilers, creamware and earthenware pots, tea caddies, and a pair of steel candle snuffers.⁷⁴⁴ Male servants

⁷⁴⁰ See Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism*; Malcolmson, *English Laundresses*.

⁷⁴¹ *OBP*, September 1775, trial of Mary Smith, (t17750913-45); *OBP*, April 1783, trial of Mark Boyle, Jane Warrickshall, (t17830430-40).

⁷⁴² Malcolmson, *English Laundresses*; Earle, ‘The Female Labour Market’. For an example of a servant who turned washerwoman in her mid-twenties see *OBP*, November 1744, Ordinary’s Account Ann Gwyn, (OA17441107).

⁷⁴³ See, for example, *Life of a Licensed Victualler’s Daughter*, esp. p. 20-21.

⁷⁴⁴ See appendix 5b.

too identified a variety of goods, but typically those associated with the silver ‘plate’ traditionally under the remit of the manservant of the house.⁷⁴⁵ The cleaning of domestic utensils appears as a routine task demanded of servant maids as well as of manservants in larger establishments. Mary Upton, for example, identified two silver spoons that were stolen from her mistress in 1793, and stated for the court that: ‘These are my mistress's spoons, I can swear them to be my mistress's, I have cleaned them so many times... One of the spoons is plain, the other is worked’.⁷⁴⁶ John Waddington, who was a servant to Robert Snow on Saville Row, similarly identified a variety of silver plate by his ‘continually using them, and cleaning them, I have used them at different times, eleven years; ... I remember the mark on this little candlestick, here is the antelope’s head’.⁷⁴⁷ The act of cleaning put these valuable goods into the hands of servants and offered the opportunity to inspect these items, and to note, for example, that some spoons were ‘plain’, others ‘worked, and that the little candlestick was marked with an antelope’s head.

If male servants’ identifications were closer to the careful enumeration and description of domestic goods typically associated with women, we need not assume that the performance of such knowledge was in any way effeminizing.⁷⁴⁸ Responsibility for utensils, like that of clothing, was clearly articulated by these men, and their knowledge and custody of them was recognised by other members of the household as well as members of the local community. It was the care of these items, and the skills in identifying them, that conveyed professional status on these men. Indeed, the knowledge displayed by these servants at court does not appear too distinct from that performed by pawnbrokers, or publicans at court, men that dealt extensively with utensils in a professional capacity. Both pawnbrokers and publicans recognised a variety of ‘domestic’ utensils by their marks and material properties, in a manner similar to male servants. Although the life cycles of servants are difficult to trace, it seems likely that male servants gained important experience through this type of work. One witness, Thomas Pritchard who identified himself as a ‘broker, auctioneer, and appraiser’ had been a servant to a nobleman when he witnessed the

⁷⁴⁵ See appendix 5a.

⁷⁴⁶ *OBP*, September 1793, trial of William James Wilce, (t17930911-48)..

⁷⁴⁷ *OBP*, April 1785, trial of William Harding, (t17850406-27).

⁷⁴⁸ Mary Beth Norton found that for men ‘furniture, dishes, and clothing could easily be lumped together under general headings’ in the claims made by loyalists to the British government, Norton, ‘Eighteenth-Century American Women’, p. 397.

crime that brought him to court in December 1782, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that the knowledge of material goods required of a professional broker were learnt whilst in place.⁷⁴⁹

Material transformations

The labour of servants was conspicuous, significant and socially articulate; it spoke not only of the successful domestic governance of the mistress of the house, but the industry and labour of servants.⁷⁵⁰ Ann Jewet, for example, who was a servant at a public house in Coal Yard on the southbank of the Thames, was told by a visitor to the house as she gathered the dishes together to be cleaned that ‘it looks creditable for servants to keep the plates and dishes clean’.⁷⁵¹ The author of *The Complete Man and Maid Servant* similarly advised housemaids that they were to be sure to ‘keep every part of the house and furniture clean, not suffering any dust to be seen, that those who visit the family may take notice of the industry of the servants, and consequently honour their master’.⁷⁵² This was not simply about restoring domestic material culture to a ‘clean’ equilibrium, but had tangible material effects. Hannah Glasse told her readers that pewter could be cleaned ‘as fine as any Silver’.⁷⁵³ The idea that housewifery, properly performed, had transformative effects is significant. Although the fashions for ‘new’ consumerables was increasing over the course of the century, most households did not replace goods wholesale, and depended on the careful maintenance of domestic stock by the mistress of the house and the servants.⁷⁵⁴ By the end of the century the authors of domestic advice literature played on this fetish for ‘newness’. Candlesticks could be cleaned ‘as clean and bright as if just out of the Shop’, and cotton stockings, properly laundered with two lathers, boiled, and weighted as they dried, would ‘look like new’.⁷⁵⁵ For this eighteenth century author, cleaning did not simply reverse the dirt, but could transform pewter

⁷⁴⁹ *OBP*, December 1782, trial of William Seton, (t17821204-42).

⁷⁵⁰ On the ‘socially articulate’ work of servants in the twentieth century see G. Adamson and V. Kelley (eds), *Surface Tensions: Surface, Finish, and the Meanings of Objects*, (Manchester, 2010), p. 8.

⁷⁵¹ *OBP*, July 1763, trial of Thomas West, James Hinchley, (t17630706-66).

⁷⁵² *The Complete Man and Maid Servant*, (London, 1764), p. 57.

⁷⁵³ Glasse, *The Servant’s Directory*, p. vii.

⁷⁵⁴ See, for example, S. Nenadic, ‘Middle-Rank Consumers and Domestic Culture in Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1720-1840’, *P&P*, No. 145, (1994), pp. 122-156, esp. p. 129.

⁷⁵⁵ Glasse, *The Servant’s Directory*, p. vii, p.14. For cleaning lace to make it ‘like new’ see pp. 9-10, p. 12, for pewter see, pp. 59-60, for chairs and settees, p. 36, for oil cloths, p. 33, p. 37.

to its more valuable cousin, and regain the value of goods ‘just out of the Shop’.⁷⁵⁶ The understanding that the work of servants could reverse the passage of time, and restore goods to the moment of consumption appears particularly important in a period in which historiography is so focused on ‘new’ commodities, on shopping, and on domestic acquisition.

The demands of this type of material expectation on servant maids was made clear in the statement of Ann Mirch who appeared before the court in 1781. Mirch had lived with her mistress Mary Steward on Vauxhall Place for a year and a half when a silver punch strainer was stolen from the house. Mirch told the court ‘I should know the strainer by three marks like dots of ink, for I have particularly tried to get those spots out. I have generally cleaned it with wet whiting and then put it by the fire, but I could not get the spots out’.⁷⁵⁷ The defensive statement about the efficacy of her cleansing method suggests the frustration that might have informed this servant’s approach to this strainer, but also, perhaps, a desire to perform her material dexterity in the public arena of the court room. That accident and mishap might have informed servants’ relationships with the goods in their care, and that this responsibility might be an onerous one, was also suggested in the statement of Elizabeth M’Cormack. M’Cormack had been a cook at a house in Knightsbridge before she was accused of stealing a silver fork from her mistress; her defence played on the acknowledged possibility of damage caused during servants’ work. She stated:

Last Wednesday week, at night, Miss brought the knife-box down as usual, and this fork was in it; I put it into a kettle of water, and after washing my dishes put it into the kettle, it went into the sink, one end went in, and I was trying to get it out; it bent, and bent it so that I strove to straighten it, and it broke, and that is the truth; I would have wished to make it good..I never robbed her; I meant to make the fork good when she paid me my wages.⁷⁵⁸

In eighteenth-century literature and visual representations, servants are frequently constructed as materially inept, wilfully destructive, and as careless, blundering and butterfingers. In part this material destruction was engendered by the different contexts into which objects slipped when in the hands of servants. As Sara Pennell,

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. vii. The anonymous author of *The Complete Man and Maid Servant* similarly argued that the skirting boards rubbed well with a piece of oily flannel, would ‘look as if newly painted’ and that silk furniture, properly cleaned and brushed, would ‘look as at first’, *The Complete Man and Maid Servant*, p. 51.

⁷⁵⁷ *OBP*, February 1781, trial of Samuel Shelley, (t17810222-32).

⁷⁵⁸ *OBP*, June 1791, trial of Elizabeth M’Cormack, (t17910608-17).

in her article on material breakage has suggested, ceramic plates were at a greater risk of being chipped, smashed, or damaged when being washed and scoured in the kitchen copper than when on display on a sideboard, or being eaten from at table.⁷⁵⁹

A material reminder of the potential for breakage survives in a small group of ceramic plates that were produced by a pottery in the outskirts of Bristol at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and which are discussed in Pennell's article. Each of the six dishes features one line of the following verse:

I am a servant unto all
Both rich and poor, grate and small
Who uses me with diligence
Will be on me at small expence
By when by servants I am ended
My grate fault is I cant be Mended.⁷⁶⁰

The verse hints at the variety of material encounters into which an object (or set of objects) entered as they became accessible to a mass market. Although goods such as ceramics were increasingly within the reach of householders lower down the social scale, the interaction with servants was clearly deemed hazardous. Servants, the verse suggests, could not be trusted to maintain the material integrity of these items. If this understanding was partly informed by the recognition of the inevitability of accidents in the busy kitchens and crowded stairways, it was also socially constructed. As Pennell suggests '[f]ragility might be understood and respected by the genteel owner, but it is the handling of ceramics by servants which amplifies the risk of their being broken. It is servants who man-and mishandle, not masters and mistresses'.⁷⁶¹ If masters and mistresses displayed their material dexterity of fragile ceramics through their careful use, a different type of haptic response was expected of servants. Carolyn Steedman has suggested that 'It just came apart in my hands' had become something of a catchphrase of servant characters by the end of the century. As Steedman suggests, however these examples of 'Mollspeak' were rarely politically neutral, but performed important functions for the employing class.⁷⁶² As with the domestic advice literature which focused on the washing of new fashionable

⁷⁵⁹ S. Pennell, "'For a Crack or Flaw Dispis'd': Thinking about Ceramic Durability and the 'Everyday' in Late Seventeenth-and Early Eighteenth-Century England", in Hamling and Richardson, *Everyday Objects*, pp. 27-40.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁷⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁷⁶² Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p. 280.

garments, this literature constructed servants as less materially attentive than their masters and mistresses.

If servant misuse of domestic goods was partly constructed as a result of different material practices, it was more typically suggested to result from the ‘careless’ nature of servants. In her epistolary fiction *The Servant’s Friend*, Sarah Trimmer suggested the material recklessness of Betty Blowers was an inevitable trait of the ‘passionate’ maid.⁷⁶³ Trimmer told the reader that Blowers was ‘an honest, trusty creature, but extremely passionate, and frequently broke things through her impatience, which was very expensive to her, as it was a rule in Mr Brown’s family for the servants to pay for what they broke’. Blowers, Trimmer reported, would ‘bounce and fly if the least thing went wrong, which was the destruction of many a plate and dish’. Betty Blowers temper was used by Trimmer to exhort the quietness and meekness desired in servant maids, but also to insist on the diligence with which servants should watch over the goods in the care. Trimmer suggested that even the most industrious of servants were guilty of not:

being concerned at the breaking of crockery-ware...How common it is to see a pile of earthen plates and dishes with the small ones at the bottom, the larger heavy ones at the top; glasses at the edge of a table, or dresser, where people are obliged to pass; and other things placed in so dangerous a manner, that the wonder is, when they are not broke; and yes, if they are cracked or thrown down, a servant is all astonishment, and cries out, “who would have thought it? I am sure I did not go to do it.”⁷⁶⁴

If breakage and ruination was understood as a result of servants’ material ignorance, carelessness, and ‘passion’, it was also understood through the lens of wilful destruction. It is possible that domestic items came to represent the person of their master or mistress, and serve as proxies for the frustrations of domestics. Certainly, in contemporary society, objects have been recognised as an extension of the individual, and as figuring in what Tim Dant called ‘distributed person-hood’.⁷⁶⁵ In a society in which individual and object were closely aligned, it is possible that breakage, spoilation, or theft could be reckoned as a personal attack and affront to

⁷⁶³ S. Trimmer, *The Servant’s Friend: An Exemplary Tale*, (London, 1787), p. 66-67.

⁷⁶⁴ Jonathan Swift similarly told his “servant” reader: ‘When your Lady sends you to wash a *China* Cup, and it did happen to fall, bring it up, and swear you did but touch it with your Hand, when it broke into *three Halves*...I do not condemn you for breaking the cup; it is certain you did not break it on purpose, and the thing is possible that it might break in your hand’, Swift, *Directions*, p. 79.

⁷⁶⁵ Dant, *Materiality and Society*, p. 69.

the person of the master or mistress, a retribution seized upon by fortuitous servant maids. The propensity of masters and mistresses to charge servants for their breakages, and even to discharge them from their services because of them, suggests that this was a risky strategy through which to seek restitution of wrongs done. A more spontaneous appropriation of domestic items is, however, hinted at in a variety of records. We are reminded of the servant maid who struck her fellow servant over the head with the iron in her hand after a quarrel in their mistress's kitchen which was outlined in the first chapter of this thesis. If the weaponisation of domestic tools was related to which objects were 'to hand', these items also had symbolic power in their association with service. A potent illustration of servants hijacking their master's goods for their own purposes is suggested when the tools of their trade were usurped for uses of a different kind. Carolyn Steedman illustrated her argument about servant resistance to the tax on female servant maids with reference to a whole host of images in which servants held their mops and brooms aloft their heads as standard bearers to their cause. Whether or not servant maids actually flocked onto the streets *en masse* to join the public demonstrations against the tax is far from clear, but the broom became a potent symbol not only of the labour of servant maids, but of their resistance to government intrusion into their business.⁷⁶⁶

In contemporary advice literature the breakages of servants were conceived to result from their careless nature, encouraged by the fact that servants did not 'own' the goods in their care.⁷⁶⁷ The issue of ownership is an interesting one. Recent work has suggested that married women maintained possessive claims on property that belonged –legally– to their husbands.⁷⁶⁸ This sense of slippage between property law and everyday ideas of ownership and possession offers a way-in to thinking about servants' engagement with domestic goods. The end of the eighteenth century witnessed a significant shift in material access and allocation between servant and employers. Not only were servants' rights to leftovers and material 'perquisites' eroded, and wages given predominantly in 'cash' and not 'kind', but the

⁷⁶⁶ Steedman, *Labour's Lost*, p. 140-146. On poison as a weapon of the weak see footnote 308. Also see R. Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*, (London, 1984), and *The Subversive Stitch Revisited: The Politics of Cloth* <<http://www.gold.ac.uk/subversivestitchrevisited/>>; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 270.

⁷⁶⁷ This difference was reiterated in advice books in which servants were continually reminded to 'treat the property of your master and mistress with as much care as if it was your own, and to inform them immediately, on all occasions, of any thing that may be likely to injure or endanger it', T. Cosnet, *The Footman's Directory, and Butler's Remembrancer*, (London, 1823), p. 17-18.

⁷⁶⁸ Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, esp. p. 229

householder's property rights were strengthened through the infamous statutes of the Bloody Code as servants' rights of access to the material culture of the domestic space was increasingly curtailed.⁷⁶⁹ Although servants appeared at court and unequivocally identified goods as belonging to their masters and mistresses, a more nuanced sense of ownership is also hinted at in the records. The barriers of material responsibility were difficult to police precisely because of the complex ways in which servants' roles demanded ownership (however fleeting) of the goods in their care.⁷⁷⁰ Although the mechanisms and letter of the law was clearly on the side of the master and the mistress of the house, in the course of everyday life, servants took domestic goods into their possession, and appear to have had at least some sense of ownership over them. It was common, for example, for servants at public and victualling houses to refer to the pots they were tasked with collecting from neighbouring houses as 'my pots'. Jeremiah Flack whose master lived on Wheatsheaf in Mary-le-bone Street, told the court he was 'gathering in *my* pots' when he apprehended a prisoner one Wednesday morning in 1786.⁷⁷¹ The multiple realms of ownership and possession operating within the domestic space were expressed clearly in the statement of William Smith who told the court: 'I was a servant to Mr. Playter... I went out to gather my pots... I missed my pots... I know they were my master's pots; his name is on the pots'.⁷⁷² This was not limited only to male servants; the fourteen-year-old servant Mary Thorpe also told the court that after making the beds, sweeping the rooms and emptying the chamber pot, she went 'out for my pots'.⁷⁷³ More typically, female servants claimed possession of goods within the house. Jane Norton, servant to a publican in King's Street, Golden Square told the court 'I was attending my business... I was putting my pots away... I continued putting my pots up'.⁷⁷⁴ Similarly, Ann Jewet told the court 'I began to

⁷⁶⁹ For attack on perquisites see Hecht, *Domestic Servant Class*, pp. 157-168. Also see J.M. Beattie 'The Criminality of Women in Eighteenth-Century England,' *JSH*, Vol. 8, Issue 4, (1975), pp. 80-116, esp. p. 92; McKay, 'Why They Stole'. Also see P. Humfrey, *Domestic Service for Women in London, 1660-1745*, PhD thesis, University of Toronto, (2000), esp. pp. 234-286.

⁷⁷⁰ For an example of a mistress not wanting to mistrust a servant who she had witnessed taking money from the kitchen table and washing from the line, see *OBP*, September 1782, trial of Catherine Hayley, (t17820911-31).

⁷⁷¹ *OBP*, December 1786, trial of Isaac Hicks, Mary Adams, (t17861213-50).

⁷⁷² *OBP*, September 1792, trial of Joseph Burnet, (t17920912-65). Also see *OBP*, May 1800, trial of Ann Hart, (t18000528-85), *OBP*, April 1795, trial of Mary Roberts, (t17950416-37), *OBP*, February 1800, trial of William Hunt (t18000219-18), *OBP*, July 1789, trial of William Parrot, Edward Glynn, (t17890708-34), *OBP*, September 1788, trial of Timothy Galloway, (t17880910-48).

⁷⁷³ *OBP*, December 1795, trial of Mary Thorpe, (t17951202-41).

⁷⁷⁴ *OBP*, January 1800, trial of Thomas Acres and William Bowden, (t18000115-57).

gather my dishes up together...I gathered them together, and went out to do my dishes'.⁷⁷⁵ The sense of ownership over domestic goods appears to have been based on specific tasks and responsibilities; it was the allocation of domestic labour that marked these items out as belonging to them.⁷⁷⁶ The association of labour with possession is further suggested by the frequency with which servants identified the fire that they lit and watched over in possessive terms. Mary Crab, servant to a lodger at a tailor's house told the court 'that morning I came down, and lighted my fire in the back parlour'.⁷⁷⁷

This sense of ownership may well have been informed by the participation of servants in a variety of domestic stocktaking practices. As Alexandra Shepard has suggested, this responsibility over household resources is a form of work that is 'missed' by historians obsessed with occupational labels and wage rates.⁷⁷⁸ If scholars have 'missed' the significance of the housewife's role in this system of domestic accounting, they have entirely neglected that of the servant. Servants recognised marks on items produced at court, identified the place of missing goods within a larger domestic stock, and produced matching goods at court to prove the correspondence of stolen goods. In a statement that is typical of female servants Catherine Willis the servant to a widow who lived at Knightsbridge, told the court:

This fork was missed about two, on Thursday morning, the 2d of June; it is marked with L.M. in a cipher at top, a four-prong fork; on the Wednesday night I put it into the closet myself, and locked the closet door; the next day the fork was gone, I am sure of it; here is another the same, we have only these two.⁷⁷⁹

In larger households, 'care' of particular domestic goods might be divvied out amongst the servants. In larger households it was typically male servants who took responsibility of the plate whilst female servants took control of the linen. In larger households, this might be quite a formal process. Percival Ewer was butler to a baronet and identified two silver forks at court not only by comparing the crest and

⁷⁷⁵ *OBP*, July 1763, trial of Thomas West and James Hinchley, (t17630706-66); *OBP*, June 1791, trial of Elizabeth M'Cormack, (t17910608-17).

⁷⁷⁶ On this see Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p. 353.

⁷⁷⁷ *OBP*, January 1765, trial of James Tonkin, (t17650116-40). Also see *OBP*, February 1775, trial of William Priddle, (t17750218-1) and *OBP*, July 1784, trial of James Morrisby (t17840707-34).

⁷⁷⁸ A. Shepard, 'Crediting Women in the Early Modern Economy', *HWJ*, Issue 79 (2015), pp. 1-24, esp. p. 5, and Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, *passim*.

⁷⁷⁹ *OBP*, June 1791, trial of Elizabeth M'Cormack, (t17910608-17). Also see *OBP*, October 1761, trial of Thomas Quin (t17611021-31).

pattern to the rest of the domestic supply, but also by cross-checking with a list made on taking the goods into his care. He told the court ‘I examined the plate, and I missed two spoon forks...I counted them on taking possession, three weeks before...I am very sure the crest was the same as the other’.⁷⁸⁰ The ceremonial handing over of goods into the care of particular servants was common in households such as this. Although William Sherman, a servant to Lady Julianna Penn, identified a variety of silver plate as belonging to his mistress by its place in a chest in the pantry, it was the butler David Hughes who took responsibility for it; indeed he ‘had an inventory of the plate when the other servant left the place ...about a fortnight before’.⁷⁸¹ If the task of inventorying was trusted only to the highest and most loyal of servants, a number of more informal accounting practices appear to have operated throughout the domestic hierarchy. Servants counted goods as they packed them away, noticed similarities of goods in cupboards and in drawers, and carefully monitored the location of various domestic resources (not least because they were subject to suspicion should they go missing).⁷⁸² The carefulness with which servants watched over these material goods suggests their role in the maintenance of the domestic economy. Catherine Sun for example, told the court ‘I had been feeding the children and had made use of both the silver spoons... I washed the spoons and put them in a drawer in the bar...I looked for them in about the value of ten minutes... and I missed the spoons’.⁷⁸³ Similarly George Robinson told the court he ‘carried down the spoons into the kitchen after dinner; as soon as we had dined the maid washed them, and they were put, after washed, two into a silver pint mug by the chimney window’.⁷⁸⁴

Conclusion

Although generally concealed behind its association with conservative, backwards-looking reproductive labour, the significance of servants’ work is evident in the records. The material interactions revealed at court reiterate the role of servants within the domestic and metropolitan economy. The growing ideological distinction between the place of residence and the place of work was only beginning to be

⁷⁸⁰ *OBP*, January 1790, trial of Joseph Blinkinship, (t17900113-23).

⁷⁸¹ *OBP*, October 1782, trial of David Hughes, Thomas Dyson, (t17821016-3).

⁷⁸² See, for example, *OBP*, April 1793, trial of George Searle, (t17930410-40) and *OBP*, December 1767, trial of William Danborough, (t17671209-18).

⁷⁸³ *OBP*, February 1759, trial of Margaret Whitehead, (t17590228-2).

⁷⁸⁴ *OBP*, June 1773, trial of William Haughton, (t17730626-29).

enshrined in bricks and mortar in the eighteenth-century metropolis. It is clear that throughout the period covered by this thesis servants assisted in warehouses, served in shops, and were otherwise integrated into the business of the house. The material encounters demanded of this type of work – the knowledge of marks, the familiarity with goods produced and sold within the household, and the monetary value and stocktaking practices of these businesses – must have served as an informal education and type of apprenticeship in trades such as this, and perhaps encouraged a business acumen which might serve the individual well in life beyond servitude.⁷⁸⁵ If the male servants who appeared before the courts may well have functioned in the position of shopman or apprentice, female servants clearly took some responsibility for serving in the shop and ‘minding’ it in the absence of other members of the household. Similarly, both male and female servants drew beer and waited on customers in public and victualling houses, and participated in a variety of seemingly ‘domestic’ concerns in commercial lodging and victualling houses. Further work would be needed to determine whether experience gained in roles such as this determined future marriage alliances and trade opportunities, although, as recent work has suggested, it is exactly this type of informal education that became more important as the apprenticeship system dwindled. This was particularly the case for women who were generally beyond the pale of the guild and apprenticeship system.⁷⁸⁶

Although servants continued to take part in trade and commercial activities, the ‘business of the house’ was changing. The increased workload associated with ‘domestic’ tasks was partly the response to the proliferation of ‘stuff’ in eighteenth-century households, but also of the changing expectations of housekeepers as the house became a site of leisure, sociability and domestic comfort. The ways in which households were ‘kept’ was increasingly read as evidence of individual preference, identity and social location in terms of age, gender, status, and so on. The order of the house was visible in the shine on pewter tableware, the patina on silverware, the cleanliness of floors, in windows free of metropolitan ‘mischiefs’, in the clean-burning fire in the fireplace, the whiteness of table napkins and linen, and the vivid

⁷⁸⁵ See, for example, *OBP*, March 1764, Ordinary’s Account John Prince, (OA17640307).

⁷⁸⁶ See for example, A. Erickson, ‘Fans and Fanny Burney’, paper delivered at Women and Gender in Early Modern Britain and Ireland: A Conference in honour of Anne Laurence, Institute of Historical Research, 4th June 2016.

colours of new-fashioned apparel and domestic textiles. The work of servants was conspicuous and socially articulate, helping to form the middling domestic ideal as well as the place of servants within it. The material transformations engendered by servants' work registered not only the successful management of the mistress of the house, but the industry of servants. Diligent labour by the working population was deemed a moral victory by their masters and mistresses, the 'industry' of servants a guarantee against the idleness and sin expected of labouring populations, and an indication of their subservience and acceptance of their place within the social hierarchy. The textiles, linens and domestic utensils identified by servants before the court register the 'assiduity, care, and industry' demanded of these objects. Although included in a court record concerned with the return of goods to their owners, in the statements that appear before the court, servants unambiguously located these items in their own hands, and identified them through their personally-held knowledge and experience.

The role of servants in domestic stocktaking practices has not been widely acknowledged, but suggests a vital function of servants in a period in which material goods continued to play an important part in the wealth of the household, and the credit on which expanding trade, commercial and political ventures were based. The meaning of 'things' was changing in the eighteenth century. Although it is well known that the function of objects shifted from repositories of wealth in the seventeenth century to items associated with the display of 'taste' and socially-inscribed identities in the eighteenth, objects remained a significant contributor of household stock, and the distinction between material and fiscal wealth was not clearly defined.⁷⁸⁷ The statements made by servants before the courts reveal their centrality to the systems of material maintenance and security, and the skills necessary for this type of work. The practice of servants taking 'possession' of particular goods was an important part of their role – particularly in larger households when the master and mistress were frequently out of town. The type of ownership and investment in domestic goods suggested in a number of the cases examined here suggests a tension between a world of goods understood in terms of ownership, and domestic practice which acknowledged a more varied interaction

⁷⁸⁷ On the increasing fiscal wealth of single people by the end of the seventeenth century see J. Spicksley, 'Fly with a Duck in Thy Mouth': Single Women as Sources of Credit in Seventeenth-Century England', *Social History*, Vol. 32, No. 2, (2007), pp. 187-207.

with things. The domestic literature – which sought not only to represent servants as ‘naturally’ deficient in the handling of domestic items, but also to school them in the ‘appropriate’ manner of material interaction – can be seen as a way to deal with this dilemma, a way to minimize what must have been the troubling prospect not only that servants might be more familiar with the objects in their case than their masters and mistresses, but that the successful performance of these material goods by those who owned them relied on the industry of servants.

The statements offered by servants at court suggest the ways in which material know-how was acquired through practice and performed through the hands. As specialisation of the metropolitan economy continued apace, servants’ work became increasingly habit-bound, the everyday demands of domesticity requiring repetitive actions and cycles of cleaning, rubbing and dusting. The identifications given at court also suggest a particularly status and gendered reckoning of ‘truth’ and ‘proof’ before the court. Masters and (less often) mistresses could appear at court and speak to their purchase of particular material items; they could bring receipts and even shopkeepers to court to reiterate their ownership of the item. This was a type of ownership endorsed by the court, ownership as celebrated in property law. On other occasions, however, domestic stocktaking practices served a similar function; housekeepers, chamber maids, butlers and footmen appeared to identify goods as part of the domestic stock. The ‘proof’ offered by these individuals did a similar thing; by referring to numbered items as part of a larger domestic stock, and identifying particular marks on items typically through the initials and number that they themselves had marked the items with, they testified to a rationalised system of material enumeration. Women further down the social hierarchy, both servants and non-servants, referred to a different type of material knowledge. Here, it was the touch of their hands that determined ownership and knowledge. The repeated references to hands reveal the type of haptic, tacit way in which female experience and material competence was learned and performed.⁷⁸⁸ If by the end of the eighteenth century, the hierarchy of knowing and communication privileged the verbal and the visual, the statements of women were no less emphatic for their appeal to the tacit. Elizabeth Walker’s action in ‘taking’ the apron in her hand reveals the

⁷⁸⁸ On haptic knowledge in the eighteenth century see, for example, C. Walsh, ‘Shopping at First Hand? Mistress, Servants and Shopping for the Household in Early Modern England, in Hussey and Ponsonby, *Buying for the Home*, pp. 13-26; Smith, ‘In Her Hands’; Pennell, ‘Perfecting Practice’.

importance of haptic knowledge in the recognition and examination of material goods. Touch, it has been argued, is the most intimate and slippery of senses, the action of holding to release a 'personal vocabulary' or 'internal archive' of feeling that exists outside of language, that is rarely articulated in histories of knowledge or skill.⁷⁸⁹ We have seen that Elizabeth Hall recognised her mistress's cap and handkerchief by having them in 'her hands often'. Mary Robinson, a servant in the house of Mr Snow similarly identified a tea spoon, 'by a crush, it had got a squeeze'.⁷⁹⁰ If upper servants could rely on list-making, and the place of valuable goods within the domestic stock, female servants lower down the social scale were more likely to refer to the labour performed by their own hands. The domestic space appears from these records as a site in which material knowledge and competence was shaped by practice. Individual objects fit into this complex web of material competencies in complex ways; the cap and handkerchief familiar to Elizabeth Hall through her washing and ironing, if known to her master, would have been identified in different terms. The records confirm that material objects cannot be understood only from the point of view of the autonomous individual, but must be located within the context of domestic practices and understood as the work of many different hands.

⁷⁸⁹ L. Miller, 'Surface as Practice' in Adamson and Kelley, *Surface Tensions*, p. 26, p. 27.

⁷⁹⁰ *OBP*, April 1785, trial of William Harding, (t17850406-27), *OBP*, April 1785, trial of Uziel Barrah, (t17850406-86).

Conclusion

This thesis has found servants gathered in conversation around the fire, quarrelling about washing, watching over the children of the house, and being wooed and presented with gifts by fellow servants and admirers. It has identified individuals as they arrived in London with their boxes, witnessed as they packed and unpacked their belongings, and shuttled between the houses in which they lived and laboured and those of family members and previous places. It has recovered the voices of servants as they complained of the demands of labour necessitated by the domestic space and its material culture; of the frustrations of not being able to get rid of a stain on a spoon entrusted to them, of accidental breakages, and of the mistress' scorn. Typically understood from the point-of-view of the master and/or mistress of the house, this thesis has reconstituted the domestic space from the point-of-view of the servants. Rather than the conspicuous consumption of genteel individuals in parlours and drawing rooms, this thesis has focused on the servants of the house, on the spaces in which they were to be found, and the material objects and practices associated with them. By re-focusing on these individuals, traditional understandings of the 'invisibility' of eighteenth-century servants have been challenged; servants were ever-present in the domestic spaces of the eighteenth-century metropolis, and our understanding of the meaning and function of these spaces needs to take these individuals into account. In the records highlighted here, the quiet of the household has been punctuated by the clatter of servants' pattens on kitchen stones, 'neat' domestic arrangements confused as floors were scrubbed and washing hung to dry, and the 'order' and 'regularity' of the day interrupted as servants prepared meals and dealt with the maintenance of the house. These seemingly mundane vignettes have allowed an access-point to the domestic space 'from below', and have encouraged us to think-through what this space meant for those that lived and worked within it.

Although snapshots of domestic life have been revealed through careful interrogation of visual representations, inventory evidence and the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey*, the silence of servants has been a serious methodological dilemma. I spent much of the time researching this thesis searching for evidence that has not been forthcoming; I sought qualitative, emotionally-rich narrative about the experience of life in servitude with which to dispel the assumptions reached by generations of scholars from the accounts of their masters and mistresses. I longed for a diary written by a

domestic, or letters written – Pamela-esque – between servant and family. I hoped, through the insights revealed in such documents, I might advance an alternative idea of ‘home’ for servants along the lines of the most imaginative work done on the eighteenth-century domestic space for other individuals, or gain fresh understandings of the self-identities of servants as either family members or as employees. My attempts have been continually frustrated. This frustration is partly because the questions asked by this thesis are not those that the authors of these sources intended to tell. It is hardly surprising that the brief glimpses into domestic life offered by court records and inventories have not allowed the construction of a thorough-going theorisation of servants’ experiences of the domestic space. What this material *has* allowed us to do is to open the door to the kitchen and the garret, peer into servants’ boxes, and think about the engagement with material items belonging to other members of the household. Through the analysis of domestic arrangements and spatial and material practices, we have been able to interrogate assumptions about servants’ domestic lives and the meaning of the domestic space as governed by social hierarchy and the ‘privacy’ of the family.

The focus on the domestic space has also allowed a re-examination of service at a key moment in its history. We have seen that accounts of early modern service focus predominantly on the household as a microcosm of society whereas narratives of the nineteenth century concern themselves with the study of servant populations *en masse*. The much-discussed transformation of servant from ‘family member to employee’ should be seen in this context. Although this framework is a helpful way through which the historical contingency of servitude can be understood, it suggests that these were mutually exclusive, historically consecutive arrangements, and encourages us to identify service as *either* a domestic relationship *or* a labour arrangement. The model not only obscures the complexities of the service relationship at the end of the century, but also preferences the relationship between servants and other members of the household above that of servants’ own understanding of their place within the domestic space. Moreover, according to a framework which sees servants transform from members of the inclusive ‘household family’ to employees at one remove from the family, the domestic space is almost inevitably aligned with ‘traditional’ understandings of service. By focusing on the experiences of domestic servants within domestic spaces at the end of the eighteenth

century, this thesis has attempted to bridge this historical divide, and to recognise the domestic space as a key site through which historical change was experienced and understood.

The household was clearly a site of servants' labour and 'business'. Although domestics were identified unambiguously as 'workers' by Carolyn Steedman, the conclusions reached here have been more tentative. Although work was one way through which servants orientated themselves to the space of the house, this association between the domestic space and 'business' was not exclusive to servants and would not have distinguished them from other members of the household – at least, not in the smaller households which have been the focus of this study.

Difference was enacted through domestic activity, but a distinction between the labour of the servant and the leisure of the family is not a useful way through which to understand the majority of households in eighteenth-century London. The framing of servants' relationship to the house simply as one of labour also flattens contemporary understandings of work. It is not the case that labour was necessarily equated simply with subordination by those who performed it. We have seen that a carefully-chosen place provided skills and competencies that contributed to some form of professional identity and status, and often informed what servants went on to do afterwards. As well as a sense of satisfaction and pride in work completed, understandings of domestic labour were also informed by duty, affection and loyalty to a household and its members; a sense of obligation which may have helped alleviate even the most laborious of tasks.

Conceptualising the domestic space simply as a site of subordination through labour also simplifies the diversity of servants' experiences. Although there may have been commonalities, friendships and allegiances forged through the shared experiences of servitude and the domestic space, the differences *between* servants has been an important theme of this thesis. Servants have, of course, been found labouring in kitchens, serving at table, and working their way up the traditionally-understood servant hierarchy. But they have also been identified working in shops and warehouses, serving in victualling houses, coffee shops and pubs, and assisting pawnbrokers and tradesmen and women. These roles informed action within the domestic space, and must also have informed the ways in which servants experienced and understood the house in which they lived and worked. 'Servant' was, as we have

seen, a catch-all category at the end of the eighteenth century and we need to know much more about the ways in which the changing economy of the metropolis informed the roles expected of servants, and the domestic experiences and self-identities of those employed in them.

The extent of servants' vulnerabilities within and dependence upon the households in which they lived and work should not be underestimated, but servants did not experience the domestic space simply as an arena of 'direct power'.⁷⁹¹ The household was a significant site of social interaction, socialisation and the subordination of servants. But it was also the location in which a variety of social identifiers were performed, and affective relationships formed and worked through. The ways in which servants experienced and navigated these domestic topographies depended on a constellation of factors *beyond* the mere fact of their servanthood. Gender, age, and domestic experience have proven to be powerful determinants of domestic action, as have independent and semi-independent affective and economic networks and allegiances beyond the house. Recent work on material culture has suggested we consider the 'biographies' of objects, and we must also think about the biographies and life histories of those who inhabited and made use of the domestic space. The temporary nature of servants' residence within the house did not mean that this space was insignificant to them. The domestic space acted as a way to make shift; a stint in service provided bed, board and a secure space in which material goods and monetary savings could be amassed. It also provided a socially-acceptable way through which to navigate the vicissitudes of economic uncertainty and opened up a world of opportunities in the capital and elsewhere. We need to know far more about the origins and life experiences of the individuals who made their living in domestic service, and about the manner in which these experiences shaped their understandings of the domestic space after their trajectory out of service.

The domestic space emerges from this thesis as an imagined and emotional landscape as much as a physical and material space; a landscape whose perimeters, functions and meanings were mutable and contested. The meaning of the metropolitan households which form the basis of this study were ever-shifting, and servants fit into (or flitted out of) these spaces as necessity, duty and opportunity

⁷⁹¹ Flather, *Gender and Space*, p. 47.

demanded. Yes, many servants fled from the house in the dead of night with plate tucked under their aprons or stashed away in their boxes, but many others remained to lock the doors against such thieves, watch over other servants in the house, and ‘rub’ polish and take care of the goods (and people) within.

There is a final point which I’d like to draw attention to here. As I mentioned in the introduction, the project was a collaborative doctoral award, and was designed to culminate not only in this thesis, but also in what the project brief called a ‘major exhibition on service’ at the Geffrye Museum. The exhibition *Swept under the Carpet? Servants and London Households, 1600-2000* was co-curated by Laura Humphreys and myself and opened at the Geffrye in March 2016. The exhibition reinterpreted the Geffrye’s period rooms which display what the museum calls the ‘main living spaces of family life’ chronologically from 1630-1998. Through curatorial intervention in the period rooms, the exhibition told the story of service and domestic labour from the seventeenth century to the present day. Although collaborative doctorates are now commonplace, the ways of talking and thinking about such collaboration has remained limited. There is a general assumption that the research project comes first and that the output – in this case the exhibition – comes later, typically as part of an ill-defined ‘impact’ agenda.⁷⁹² I’d like to make clear here that although this thesis has not been about the interpretation of service, or the exhibition produced by it, it was heavily informed by the prospect of the exhibition, and that the research questions themselves were forged in the process of collaboration.

With the benefit of hindsight, I can see that the focus on the kitchen and garret was informed by the curatorial challenges posed by the exhibition. Although the display of servants’ lives has been a recent marketing ploy and interpretive strategy for a number of heritage sites, there is not a large literature on the interpretation of service in museums or in historic houses.⁷⁹³ Despite the fact that interpretation is generally

⁷⁹² L. King and G. Rivett, ‘Engaging People in Making History: Impact, Public Engagement and the World Beyond the Campus’, *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 80, (2015), pp. 218-223.

⁷⁹³ There are important exceptions to this, but most focus on large nineteenth and twentieth-century estates, usually in the US. See J. Putz, *Voices from the Back Stairs: Interpreting Servants’ Lives at Historic House Museums*, (DeKalb, 2009), P. West, ‘Uncovering and Interpreting Women’s History at Historic House Museums’, in G. Lee Dubrow and J. B. Goodman, (eds), *Restoring Women’s History through Historic Preservation*, (Baltimore, 2003), pp. 83-95, and K. Diethorn with J. Bacon, ‘Domestic Work Portrayed: Philadelphia’s Restored Bishop William White House – A Case Study’ pp. 96 – 110 in the same volume. For the British historical context see Pennell, *The Birth of the*

constructed through spatially-segregated displays of life ‘below stairs’, there has been little attempt to think through the meaning of the domestic sites which form the locus of this interpretation. Research might be done on a property-by-property basis, but there has not been an attempt to think more broadly about this, and to consider what the spaces might have meant to those that inhabited them. The first part of the thesis might, therefore, be understood as an attempt to think more carefully about these spaces, to interrogate assumptions about them simply as ‘low status’ rooms, and integrate them into broader narratives of historical change. Although a comprehensive overview of interpretation strategies of these spaces was beyond the scope of this thesis, it is hoped that by providing a basic layout of the material realities of kitchens and garrets, and by offering an interpretation of their meaning in the eighteenth century, these chapters can aid curators in their attempt.

The second part of the thesis might also be understood in this context. The focus on material objects and servants’ material lives became particularly significant because of the curatorial challenges posed by the exhibition. Although objects are now central to the questions being asked of eighteenth-century domestic spaces, they necessarily took on extra significance in the context of the collaborative project. Objects are obviously central to museum interpretation, and are understood (particularly by visitors) to offer an access point to an ‘authentic’ past.⁷⁹⁴ The difficulty of object-led exhibitions to tell the stories of those ‘hidden from history’ has long been lamented by museum professionals, and it quickly became clear that it was not going to be possible to acquire a sufficient collection of objects identifiable with individual servants to populate the Geffrye’s temporary exhibition space within the remit of the project. We were, instead, inspired by recent museum interpretation strategies which have shifted from object-centred, connoisseurial approaches to ‘ideas-led’ displays which tell stories which are not necessarily self-evident from extant objects.⁷⁹⁵ Rather than an exhibition about servants in the temporary exhibition space

English Kitchen, pp. 159-171 and L. Delap, *Knowing their Place: Domestic service in twentieth-century Britain*, (Oxford, 2011), pp. 206-235. For visitor responses to the display of service and slavery in this country see L. Smith, ‘Deference and Humility: The Social Values of the Country House’ in L. Gibson and J. Pendlebury, (eds), *Valuing Historic Environments*, (Farnham, 2009).

⁷⁹⁴ There is an enormous museological literature on this. See, for example, C. Hampp and S. Schwan, ‘Perception and Evaluation of Authentic Objects: Findings from a Visitor Study’, *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 29, Issue 4, (2014), pp. 349-367.

⁷⁹⁵ See for example, S. Crew and J. Sims, ‘Locating Authenticity: Fragments of a Dialogue’ in I. Karp and S. Lavine (eds), *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, (Washington and London, 1991), pp. 159-175.

– an approach which would have reinforced the spatial segregation we were critiquing – it was decided that the exhibition would take the form of intervention in the period rooms.

The parlour from 1745, for example, was transformed to display a domestic scenario that would have been all-too familiar to contemporaries; a maid servant about to leave her place, receive her wages, and have her box open for inspection on the parlour floor. The presence of the servants' box in the middle of the room reiterated that the presence of servants was not limited to kitchens and garrets, and also allowed us to introduce much broader historical themes into the space of the parlour.

Generally aligned with ideas and practices of politeness, sensibility and display, the box here suggested the parlour acted as a disciplinary space as well as an important location for the settling of the domestic economy. The box also demonstrated the significance of the domestic space as a site of security for servants, and highlighted the negotiation of inter-personal boundaries and privacies that went along with that.

The intervention in the period rooms not only offered an opportunity to present a different series of scenarios to visitors, but also encouraged members of the public to think differently about the objects on display. The scenario for the 1790's parlour, for example, was intended to portray the disruption caused by the routine maintenance of this space before the family awoke. Chippendale chairs, which typically appear as examples of innovation in eighteenth-century design, were relegated to the sides of the room and presented as obstacles around which servants had to manoeuvre.

Similarly, the loom-woven carpet, famously an example of the manufacturing processes and the 'consumer revolution' which made floor coverings accessible to the middle classes, was thrown back to allow the floor to be swept. Through the re-arrangement of the Geffrye's scenarios and the introduction of new and replica objects, the meaning of these rooms was transformed.

The scenarios designed for the period rooms are now part of the Geffrye's exhibition history, and may be drawn on for display in the future. The integration of these scenarios post-exhibition seems to be a particularly fruitful way through which servants' presence in the domestic space can be normalised. Over the course of the project, the Geffrye were able to acquire a number of visual and textual sources which relate to servants, and commissioned a number of replica items such as brushes, brooms and buckets which proved difficult to source from elsewhere. These

items are now a part of the Geffrye's collection, and it is hoped that as the museum works towards its re-development, and towards its new thematic gallery on 'Home' that these objects will inform the stories that the museum is able to tell. Even if this thesis is not read by anyone other than my examiners, the research done for it has contributed to the Geffrye's collection and through the collection and galleries integrates servants into understandings of the home and domestic life in the eighteenth century.

Appendix 1: The Inventory Sample

| | Name | Date | Repository | Type | Ref number | Document Name | Parish | Occupation? | Rooms No. * | Value of goods listed |
|----|-----------------------|------|------------|--|--------------------|--|---|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Luke Hepworth | 1740 | NA | Chancery | C103/176 | Master Blunt's Exhibits: Re. HEPWORTH: Inventories of goods of Luke Hepworth, will of Ann Hepworth with probate and deeds: Marylebone, Middx | St Marylebone, Middlesex | - | 9 | - |
| 2 | John Mitford | 1740 | NA | Chancery | C113/11 | Master Kindersley's Exhibits: Re. PHILLIPS: Inventory of households goods of John Mitford: Bow, Middx | Bow | - | 11 | - |
| 3 | William Snelling Esq. | 1740 | LMA | Court of Orphans | CLA/002/02/01/3384 | Orphans inventories: William Snelling, Citizen and Salter, 1714-1742 | St. Buttolph without Bishopsgate | Citizen and Salter | 13 | £2546.6s.6d. |
| 4 | William Crawford | 1741 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 3/40/26 | Crawford, William, p. Of St. John's, Southwark, co. Surr., Master of merchant ship Good Intent. | St. John Southwark | Master of Merchant Ship | 6 | £92.-.8d |
| 5 | John Crich | 1741 | NA | Chancery | C104/204 | Master Tinney's Exhibits: LOWDEN v Berry: Affidavits of Sarah Crich, widow, defendant...inventory of goods of John Crich, deceased, all relating to a cause in Chancery between John Crich and John Sells of St George, Bloomsbury | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | Benjamin Tice | 1744 | NA | Chancery | C111/227 | Master Brougham's Exhibits: TICE v MATTHEWS: Inventory of the goods and stock in trade of Benjamin Tice at Silver Street, St George, Bloomsbury, Middx. | Silver Street St. George, Bloomsbury, Middlesex | Baker | 9 | £68.11s.6d |
| 7 | Francis Gibson | 1746 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 3/45/17 | Gibson, Francis, p. of St. Georges, Bloomsbury, co. Midd. | St George, Bloomsbury | painter? | 7 | £217.3s.- |
| 8 | George Bratwaite | 1746 | NA | Chancery | C105/5 | Master Lynch's Exhibits: BRAITHWAITE v TAYLOR: Deed relating to London | Lombard Street St Edmund the King | Citizen and Goldsmith | 7 | - |
| 9 | Jonathan Jekyll | 1747 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 3/46/1 | Jekyll, Jonathan, p. of St. Andrews, Holborn, co. Midd. (watchmaker) | St. Andrews, Holborn, Middlesex | watchmaker? | 6 | £77.3s.11d |
| 10 | James Gooding | 1747 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 3/46/8 | Gooding, James, p. of St. Dunstons in the West, London. (saddler) | St. Dunstons in the West, London | saddler? | 7 | £96.12s.6d |
| 11 | Thomas Hill | 1747 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 3/46/4 | Hill, Thomas, p. of St. Botolphs, Billingsgate, London. (vintner, house at Greenwich, house at Thames Street, London) | St. Botolphs, Billingsgate. | vintner? | 10 11 | £1687.3s.- |
| 12 | William Hiccocks | 1749 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 3/48/7 | Hiccocks, William, p. of St. Gregorys, London, (cheesemonger) | St. Gregorys, London. | cheesemonger? | 5 | £128.10s.4d |
| 13 | John Brice | 1750 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | C103/176 | Brice, John, p. of St. Pauls, Covent Garden, co. Middl, (drapery) | St. Pauls, Middlesex | draper? | 7 | £1372.15s.- |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|-------|-----|--|----------------|---|--|----------------------|----|--------------|
| 14 | Thomas Shackleton | 1750 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 3/49/1 | Shackleton, Thomas, p. of St. Bartholomew the Great, bachelor | St. Bartholomew the Great | - | 4 | £100.15s.- |
| 15 | Thomas Ockleshaw | 1752 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB3/51/3 | Ockleshaw, Thomas, p. of St. Albans, Wood Street, London. | Woodstreet, St Albans | Upholsterer? | 5 | - |
| 16 | Stephen Dobbs | 1752 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 3/51/6 | Dobbs, Stephen, p. of St. Dunstons in the West, London, bachelor, (poulterer). | St. Dunstons in the West, London | poulterer? | 3 | £47.-.- |
| 17 | Richard Knight | 1753 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 31/352/75 | Richard Knight of St Peter Cornhill, London. Probate inventory, or declaration, of the estate of the same, deceased | St Peter Cornhill, London | - | 7 | £306.15s.6d |
| 18 | Elizabeth Sowton | 1753 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 3/52/12 | Sowton, Elizabeth, widow, p. of St. Andrews, Holborn, London. | St Andrew, Holborn | - | 3 | £291.13s.7d |
| 19 | George Woodrove | 1745 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 3/45/34 | Woodrove, George, p. of St. Brides, London, widower. | St Brides | Gilder? | 4 | £64.14s. 7d. |
| 20 | Benjamin Axford | 1756 | NA | Chancery | C110/151 | Master Horne's Exhibits: BLATCH v AXFORD: Inventory of goods of Benjamin Axford: London | Wood Street | . | 7 | - |
| 21 | Christian Tiethen | 1742 | NA | Chancery | C104/211 | Master Tinney's Exhibits: ARNEY v HESS: Inventories of the goods of Christian Tiehlen at Lemans Street, Goodman's Fields, St Mary, Whitechapel, Middx. | Leman Street, Goodman's Fields, St Mary, Whitechapel, Middx. | Sugar Baker | 8 | £161.5.- |
| 22 | Wilkinson Crumpton | 1760 | NA | Chancery | C110/157 | Master Horne's Exhibits: Ex parte CRUMPTON: Inventories of household goods etc: London. Includes inventory of household goods of Wilkinson Crumpton, watchmaker of Primrose St. St Botolph Bishopsgate. | Primrose Street, St Botolph Bishopsgate | Watchmaker | 7 | £65.3s. - |
| 23 | Thomas Robinson | 1772, | NA | Chancery | C103/195 | Master Blunt's Exhibits: ROBINSON v ROBINSON: Arbitrators' award, account book, bond, warrant to confess judgement and inventory, London, | Bell Court, Mincing Lane, St Dunstons in the East | - | 10 | £275.12s.6d |
| 24 | William Armroid | 1773 | NA | Chancery | C110/146 | Master Horne's Exhibits: ARMROID v PELL: Inventory of William Armroid's goods and sale catalogue | Commissions Stable Yard, Great Tower Hill | - | 3 | £122.1s.6d |
| 25 | Richard Davies | 1778 | NA | Chancery | C110/187 | Master Horne's Exhibits: WILLIAMS v YATES. Inventory of goods of Richard Davies, Islington Middlesex. | 1 Pleasant Row, St Mary Islington | coffee house keeper? | 8 | £333.4s.6d |
| 26 | Thomas Marriot | 1779 | LMA | Personal Property Records | ACC/0358/001 | Inventory of Household Furniture, Fixtures and Effects of Mr. Thomas Marriot Deceased, at the Vineyard House in Cold Bath Fields | Vineyard House, Coldbath Fields | innkeeper | 5 | £70.5s.- |
| 27 | George Perring | 1780 | NA | Chancery | C108/83 | STRANGE v Harris: Titles deeds, Hammersmith and Fulham, Sale catalogue of household goods: | Queen Street, Hammersmith | Gardener | 6 | - |

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|----|--------------------------|------|----|--|-----------------|---|--|-------------------------------|----|-------------|
| | | | | | | Middx., 1775-1783 | | | | |
| 28 | Elizabeth Willson | 1781 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 31/683/495 | Elizabeth Wilson of St Margaret, Westminster, Middlesex. Probate inventory, or declaration, of the estate of the same, deceased. | Dog and Bear Inn, Borough High Street, Southwark | public house keeper? | - | £190.4s. 9d |
| 29 | James Waller, Esq. | 1782 | NA | Chancery | C108/ 367 | Master Farrer's Exhibits: LODES v BATES: Deeds relating to Whitechapel, Marylebone, Middx. Marriage settlement of Edward Yale of Bryn, Denb, and Mary Waller of London (1769). Sales catalogue of household furniture. | Mansell Street, Goodman's Fields. | - | 10 | - |
| 30 | William Chenery | 1785 | NA | Chancery | C107/137 | Master Senior's Exhibits: EVERIDGE v WOOD: Abstract of title to property in Portman Square and catalogues of sale in Clerkenwell etc., Middx. | No. 84 Leadenhall Street | Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer | 7 | - |
| 31 | John Jackson, Esq. | 1787 | NA | Supreme Court of Judicature | J90/1843 | Cause: West v Jackson Inventory of plate, books and other effects of John Jackson, deceased, in dwelling-house in Nassau Street in St. Anne's, Westminster, MIDDX., in house and shop and Hayes Court, and in shop and warehouse in Crown Street, Oxford Street, MIDDX. | Dwelling House Nassau Street, St. Anne's, Westminster House and shop Corner of Haye's Court Shop and warehouse The Corner of Crown Street in Oxford Street | Grocer? | 9 | £274.18.6 |
| 32 | Thomas Massey | 1788 | NA | Chancery | C108/166 | Master Farrer's Exhibits: CARPENTER v ASHNESS: BRYER V ASHNESS: Probate of wills of... Thomas Massey of St Andrew's Holborn (1788) | Field Lane, Holborn, | Salesman - clothing | 3 | £141.6s.6d |
| 33 | Mr Webb | 1792 | NA | Chancery | C108/285 | Master Farrer's Exhibits: ? WEBB v Ives: Jeweller's account books, inventories and sale catalogues of jewels and household goods. | Great Portland Street | Jeweller | 5 | £5330.14s.- |
| 34 | William George Blachford | 1793 | NA | Records of the Exchequer | E140/6/1 | BLACHFORD v BLACHFORD: An Inventory of the household furniture, plates, linen, and china of Mr George Blachford at 19 Charlotte Street, Bedford Square | 19 Charlotte Street, Bedford Square | - | 8 | £309. 9s. - |
| 35 | Goddier | 1793 | NA | Supreme Court of Judicature | J90/434 | Cause: Godier v Godier Inventory of household effects and stock in trade of - Goddier, deceased, at his house in Bethnal Green, MIDDX | Fleet Street, St Mathew Bethnel Green in the County of Middlesex | Weaver? Pawnbroker? | 2 | - |
| 36 | Willam Cowden | 1796 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 31/915/53 | William Cowden, bricklayer of St John Hackney, Middlesex. Probate inventory, or declaration, of the estate of the same, deceased. | Mare Street, St John Hackney. | Bricklayer | 5 | £192.2s.6d |
| 37 | James Blatch | 1796 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 31/915/62 | James Blatch of St Dunstan in the West, London. Probate inventory, or declaration, of the estate of the same, deceased. | Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, St. Dunstan in the West. | Linen Draper | 8 | £1113.6s.4d |
| 38 | Gawler Gryffyth | 1800 | NA | Probate: Prerogative | PROB 31/921/733 | Gawler Gryffyth Rickman of Kensington, Middlesex, formerly | St Andrews Holborn, | - | 10 | £589.-.- |

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|----|-------------------|------|----|--|-----------------|--|---|---------------------|---|-------------|
| | Rickman | | | Court of Canterbury | | of St Andrew, Holborn, Middlesex. Probate inventory, or declaration, of the estate of the same, deceased. | Middlesex | | | |
| 39 | John Harris | 1800 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB31/915/80 | John Harris of St Mary Whitechapel, Middlesex. Probate inventory, or declaration, of the estate of the same, deceased. | Chamber Street, St Mary Whitechapel. | Glassmaker | 7 | £163.2s.- |
| 40 | Nicholas Browning | 1800 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 31/921/736 | Nicholas Browning of St Giles Cripplegate, London. Probate inventory, or declaration, of the estate of the same, deceased. | St Giles Cripplegate, London. | Baker | 9 | £194.1s.- |
| 41 | John Sears | 1800 | NA | Probate: Prerogative Court of Canterbury | PROB 31/921/639 | John Sears of St Saviour Southwark, Surrey. Probate inventory, or declaration, of the estate of the same, deceased. | Worcester Street, St Saviour Southwark. | Turner? Blacksmith? | 7 | £579.15s. - |

The following were also consulted for the purposes of chapter two:

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|------|-----|------------------|--------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------|----|------------|
| 1 | William Willis | 1706 | LMA | Court of Orphans | CLA/002/02/01/2742 | Orphans inventories: William Willis, Citizen and Mercer | St Peter Poor in Broadstreet | Mercer | 16 | £526.02.04 |
| 2 | Joshua Sabin | 1707 | LMA | Court of Orphans | CLA/002/02/01/2779 | Orphans inventories: Joshua Sabin, Citizen and Weaver | St. Botolph Bishopsgate | Weaver | 10 | £952.16.10 |
| 3 | William Durant | 1709 | LMA | Court of Orphans | CLA/002/02/01/2885 | Orphans inventories: William Durrant, Citizen and Embroiderer | Cheapside | Embroiderer | 10 | £31.5.- |
| 4 | Caleb Booth | 1714 | LMA | Court of Orphans | CLA/002/02/01/2982 | Orphans inventories: Caleb Booth, Citizen and Soapmaker | St. Buttolph Bishopsgate | Soapmaker | 7 | £484.17.10 |
| 5 | John Alsop | 1726 | LMA | Court of Orphans | CLA/002/02/01/3271 | Orphans inventories: John Alsop, Citizen and Vintner | St. Lawrence Jewry | Vintner | - | £200.-.- |
| 6 | Thomas Hyde | 1733 | LMA | Court of Orphans | CLA/002/02/01/338 | Orphans inventories: Thomas Hyde | Waltham Stow, County of Essex | Mercer | 11 | - |

*The number of rooms has been calculated according to Peter Earle's method which is outlined as follows: 'Number of rooms ...include bedrooms (inc. garret bedrooms), living rooms and kitchens but do not include such additions as washhouses or butteries; nor do they include cellars or rooms used for work such as shops, workshops or warehouses', see Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 375 (footnote 16).

Appendix 2: Kitchen tables and chairs from the inventory sample 1740-1800

| Name | Year | Table | Chair |
|--------------------------|------|---|---|
| Luke Hepworth | 1740 | - | - |
| John Mitford | 1740 | Large stone table Wainscott leaf table A little ord. table | 3 Chairs 4 Stools |
| William Snelling | 1740 | Three Oval Tables | Two Chairs Two Stools |
| William Crawford | 1740 | Two tables | Four Matted Chairs |
| John Crich | 1741 | 2 Oval Tables Back kitchen: Wainscoat Table | 4 old Chairs 5 old Chairs |
| Thoms Ockleshaw | 1752 | Wainscot Oval Table Piller Ditto | Four Chairs |
| Elizabeth Sowton | 1753 | Wainscott ovell Table | Three leather Chairs An Elbow Cane Chair and Cushion |
| Benjamin Tice | 1744 | - | - |
| Frances Gibson | 1745 | One Wainscot dining Table A Mahogany Claw Table | One Wallnuttree Corner Chair Six wood Chairs One old Stool |
| George Woodrowe | 1745 | - | - |
| George Bratwaite | 1746 | - | - |
| Jonathan Jekyll | 1746 | - | - |
| James Gooding | 1746 | Two tables | - |
| Thomas Hill | 1746 | Square deal Table | - |
| William Hiccocks, | 1748 | Two tables | Six Chairs |
| John Brice | 1749 | - | - |
| Thomas Shackleton | 1749 | No kitchen | |
| Stephen Dobbs | 1752 | A Table | Four Wooden Chairs |
| Richard Knight | 1752 | A Mahogany Dining Table A Wainscott ditto A Table on a Claw | Six Chairs |
| Benjamin Axford | 1756 | table | Chair & Stool |
| Christian Tiethen | 1761 | A Wainscott Ovell table A Claw table | 10 Chairs |
| Wilkinson Crumpton | 1764 | - | One Wood Chair |
| Thomas Robinson | 1772 | A deal table with a drawer A wainscott Claw table | 2 wood chairs 2 matted chairs |
| William Armroid | 1773 | A large mahogany pillar and claw table A ditto with carv'd claws and cover | Five old chairs, a cushion 2 stool |
| Richard Davies | 1778 | Middlesex: Wainscot Dineing Table Coffee House on Fleet Street: A Deal table | Middlesex: 4 Wooden Chairs Coffee House on Fleet Street: 5 Chairs 2 Stools |
| Thomas Marriott | 1779 | Public house Two Wainscott oval Tables A Ditto Claw Table | Public house Four chairs |
| Thomas Massey | 1788 | No kitchen | |
| George Perring | 1780 | Two oak tables Deal ditto | Two Windsor Chairs and cushions Three wood chairs And a rush ditto |
| Elizabeth Wilson | 1781 | No kitchen | - |
| James Waller | 1782 | A wainscot oval dining table A ditto pillar and claw table | A stool Six fan backed chairs, with leather seats, and brass nailed. |
| William Chenery | 1785 | Waistcot table | Six strong beach chairs |
| John Jackson | 1786 | An ovell Mahogany Dining table A Do Claw table 2 Deal tables | 5 chairs |
| Mr Webb | 1792 | No kitchen | |
| Goddier | 1793 | No kitchen | |
| William George Blachford | 1793 | A 3ft 6 Mahogany Dining Table | Three Wood bottom Chairs Three Rush Do |
| James Blatch | 1796 | - | Six Chairs with Leather Seats and a Cane Couch |
| William Cowden | 1796 | Waistcoat Pillar and Claw Table | Six Matted Bottom Chairs |
| Gawler Gryffyth Rickman | 1800 | Wainscot Table A Deal Do A Claw Do | Three Chairs |
| John Harris | 1800 | A Mahogy dining table A 2 foot 6 Card table with a drawer | - |

| | | | |
|-------------------|------|--|---|
| Nicholas Browning | 1800 | Wainscoat pillar and claw table | Six wooden bottom chairs |
| John Sears | 1800 | A Mahogany Dining Table A Wainscot Claw Table | Six wood Bottom Chairs One Elbow Chair |

Appendix 3a: Location of bedsteads from inventory sample, 1740-1800

| Name | Year | Description of bed | Location |
|------------------|------|---|--|
| Hepworth | 1740 | A bedstead Bedstead box A bedstead and old Teaster A bedstead Bedstead bedstead | Ffore garet right hand Ffore Garrett Left hand Two pair stairs right hand Two pair stairs room Left hand One pair stairs Blue room one pair of stairs |
| Mitford | 1740 | Bed...wrought at top & gilt Bed & mattress Old Blue Harateen Bed Handsome workt Bed Old stuff Bed Old blue Cheny Bed A Garrett | Best Chamber Lady's own Chamber In the Chamber over y ^e Kitchen In the Chamber over the Hall Johns Room Anns Chamber A Bedstead |
| William Snelling | 1740 | Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Cradle Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead One Table Bedstead Soild Bedstead Wallnuttree Chair Bed Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead with Wrought Work Bedstead Bedstead with Wrought Work Bedstead Bedstead | Store Garrett Store Garrett Store Garrett Store Garrett Maid's Garrett Maid's Garrett Men's Garrett Men's Garrett Men's Garrett Wainscoat Garrett Back Dressing Room 2 Pr of Stairs Back Chamber Nursery Nursery Stair Chamber Great Chamber Widow's Chamber Hall and Stair Case Coach Mans Room |
| William Crawford | 1740 | Sacking bottom bedstead Sacking bottom bedstead Pallet Bedstead Sacking bottom bedstead Sacking bottom bedstead | Fore Garrett Back Garrett Back Garrett Fore Chamber Back Chamber |
| John Crich | 1741 | Bedstead Bedstead 1 Teaster | Back Kitchen two Pair of Stairs fforwards |
| Thoms Ockleshaw | 1752 | Old Bedstead Old Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Mahogany head Board Mahogany Bedstead with Teaster | Ware House three pair of Stairs Ware House three pair of Stairs Two pair Stairs backwards Two pair Stairs forwards One pair stairs backwards |
| Elizabeth Sowton | 1753 | Bedstead | Back Chamber 2 p ^r stairs |
| Benjamin Tice | 1744 | Bedstead and Red half teaster Bedstead half teaster A Bedstead half teaster A Bedstead half teaster A Bedstead hole teaster A Bedstead A Bedstead Bedstead | Fore Garrat Back Garrat Two Pairs of Stairs Forwards Two Pairs of Stairs Backwards One Pair Backwards Parlour Room over the Kitchen In the Shop |
| Frances Gibson | 1745 | A Sacking Bedstead Sacking bedstead A Sacking Bedstead Sacken Bedstead Sacken Bedstead and half Teaster | Fore Garrett N ^o 2 Back Garret N ^o 4 Bed Chamber 1 Pair of Stairs N ^o 8 Bed Chamber 1 Pair of Stairs N ^o 8 Closett Ground ffloor |
| George Woodrowe | 1745 | - | - |
| George Bratwaite | 1746 | An old Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead & half Canopy A Bedstead A Child's Bedstead Bedstead | Back Garet Fore Garet Three pair backwards Three pair forwards Three pair forwards Two pair forward |
| Jonathan Jekyll | 1746 | Bedstead Table Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Buroe Bedstead | Fore Garrets Fore Garrets Two pair Forwards Two pair Backwards Fore Parlour Fore Parlour |

| | | | |
|--------------------|------|---|---|
| James Gooding | 1746 | Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Press Bedstead Turnup Bedstead | Back Garret Three Pair of Stairs forwards Three pair of Stairs backwards Three pair of Stairs backwards Two Pair of Stairs forwards Parlour and Shop Shop and Door |
| Thomas Hill | 1746 | One Turn up Bedstead Wainscott Bedstead Mahogany press Bedstead Press Bedstead Press Bedstead Table Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Table Bedstead Bedstead Four Post Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Press Bedstead | Garrets Best Bed Chamber Bed Room adjoining Blue Bed Chamber New Room over the Kitchen In the ffront Kitchen Ffront Garret In the Garret adjoining In the Garret adjoining Middle Garret Green Bed Chamber Middle Bed Room Back Bed Room adjoining Back Bed Room adjoining Bed room next the Dining Room In the Shop |
| William Hiccocks, | 1748 | Part of a bedstead A bedstead Bedstead Bedsted Table bed | A Garret Three pair of Stairs Room 2 pair of Stairs right hand room 2 pair of Stairs left hand Room Compting House |
| John Brice | 1749 | Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead | Back Garret Fore Garret Back Chamber 2 pair Stairs Fore Chamber 2 pair Stairs Back Chamber 1 pair Staire |
| Thomas Shackleton | 1749 | Bedstead Old bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead | Garretts Garretts Room three pair Stairs Room three pair Stairs Room two pair Stairs |
| Stephen Dobbs | 1752 | Corded Bedstead Four post Sacking Bedstead Table Bedstead Press Bedstead | Garret Room three pair of Stairs Kitchen Kitchen |
| Richard Knight | 1752 | Bedstead with a Compass rod Bedstead Bedstead Horse Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead | Maids Garret Mans Garrett Mans Garrett Mans Garrett Bed Chamber two pair of Stair backwards Room two pair of Stairs forward |
| Benjamin Axford | 1756 | Deale Press bedsted Beach bedsted Beach Turney bedsted Beach Stump beds ^{td} | Garrets Two Pair of Stairs Forwards and backwards One P ^r Stairs Backward Dining Room |
| Christian Tiethen | 1761 | A Turnup bedstead A 4 nook bedstead 4 post bedstead Bedstead Bedstead Bedstead | Back Garratt Two pair of Stairs forwards 2 pair of Stairs Backwards Mens Lodging Mens Lodging Mens Lodging |
| Wilkinson Crumpton | 1764 | Trump box bedstead with half Canopy Smal childs bedstead Old turnup bedstead Four post bedstead Child bed basket Four post bedstead Childs size bedstead | Back Garret Back Garret In the Garret at Stairhead In the two pair of Stairs fore Room In the two pair of Stairs fore Room Back room two pair of Stairs Washouse |
| Thomas Robinson | 1772 | Turnup bedstead Bedstead Bedstead 4 post bedstead 4 post bedstead 4 post bedstead 4 post bedstead 4 post bedstead 4 post bedstead 4 post bedstead mahog ^y posts | Laundry Mans Garret Maids Room Paper Garret Two pair Backwards Clerks Room Clerks Room Nursery Nursery Blew Bed chamber 1 pair Stairs |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|------|---|---|
| William Armroid | 1773 | Turn-up bracket bedstead and half teaster A 4 post bedstead A wainscot pres bedstead, rod and lath | Back Bed room Bed Chamber adjoining Kitchen |
| Richard Davies | 1778 | Half Teastor Turnup Bedstead Four Post Bedstead with Rod Four Post Bedstead Four Post Bedstead Side Bedstead Stump bedstead Wainscot Bureau Bedstead 4 post Bedstead Waistcot Sette Bedstead Half Tester Bedstead 4 Post Bedstead Deal Press Bedstead 4 Post bedstead 4 post Bedstead Field Bedstead Four post Bedstead Settee Bedstead Half Tester bedstead 4 Post Bedstead 4 post bedstead | Garret Two Pair Stairs Back Room One Pair of Stairs back Room Back Parlour Back Parlour Waites Room Waites Room Nursery Nursery Maids Room Green Room Backwards 2 p ^r Middle Room Red Room Green Room One p ^r Middle Room Check Room Adjoining Great Dining Room Small Room Adjoining Mr Davis Room 2 P ^r Forward Red adjoining |
| Thomas Marriott | 1779 | Four post bedstead A Deal bureau bedstead Deal bureau bedstead | Two pair left Hand Back Room One pair of stairs |
| Thomas Massey | 1788 | 4-post bedstead 4-post bedstead | One pair, backward Dining Room |
| George Perring | 1780 | Stump bedstead Stump bedstead Stump bedstead 4 post bedstead 4 post bedstead | East Garret East Garret South Garret South-West Chamber East Chamber |
| William and Elizabeth Wilson | 1781 | Oak Stump Bedstead Stump Bedstead Whole Testor Turnup Bedstead with Half Teasters Turnup Bedstead Oak four post Bedstead Four post bedstead Half Tester turnup Bedstead | Garrett Farther Bed Room Left Hand Two Bedded Room Two Bedded Room Yellow Bed Room Right Hand Front Bed Room Further Room Right Hand |
| James Waller | 1782 | Stump bedstead A four-post bedstead A bedstead Four-post bedstead Four-post bedstead A tent bedstead | Back garret Two pair forwards Landing Place Back Room Two Pair Room adjoining Front Room One Pair |
| William Chenery | 1785 | Four-post bedstead and laths Half teaster bedsteads Half teaster turn-up bedstead and laths A tent bedstead A four-post bedstead with mahogany feet posts A four-post bedstead with japanned feet posts | Back Garret Adjoining Adjoining Room-adjoining Two pair Backwards Room Adjoining |
| John Jackson | 1786 | 4 post Bedstead Field Bedstead Child Bed Basket 4 post Bedstead 4 post Bedstead with Mahogany feet 4 post Bedstead Mohogany feet pillars Turn up Bedstead | Back Garrett Back Garrett Front Garrets Front Garrets Back Room two pair Stairs Front Room two Pair Stairs Parlour |
| Mr Webb | 1792 | Half teaster Bedstead | Front Garret (left hand) |
| Goddier | 1793 | Stump Bedstead Four post Bedstead | Garrett Back Parlour |
| William George Blachford | 1793 | A 4 f 6 four post Bedstead A 4 f 6 Half Tester Bedstead A 4 f 6 Stump Bedstead A 4 f 6 Tent Bedstead A 4 f 6 Jappand four post Bedstead A 5 f Jappand four post Bedstead | Back Garret Back Garret Back Garret Two Pair Front Room Two Pair Back Room One Pair Front Room |
| James Blatch | 1796 | A ffour Post Bedstead Tent Bedstead Four Post Bed Four Post Bedstead A ffour Post Bedstead with Mahogany ffeet | Left hand Garrett Right Garrett Right Garrett Two Pair right hand BedRoom one Pair |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------|---|--|
| William Cowden | 1796 | Stump Bedstead Stump Bedstead Half Teaster Bedstead A Deal Painted Press Bedstead with two ffolding Doors A Mahogany four Post Bedstead with Mahogany Carved and fluted Posts A Painted four Post Bedstead Turn up Bedstead | Front Room three Pair of Stairs Front Room three Pair of Stairs Front Room two Pair Dining Room Bed Chamber One Pair of Stairs Bed Chamber One Pair of Stairs Wash House |
| Gawler Gryffyth Rickman | 1800 | Half Teaster Bedstead Tent Bedstead Half Teaster Bedstead Four Post Bedstead 4 Post Bedstead A four post bedstead | Front Attick Back Attick Right Hand front attick Front Room two pair Back Room 2 pair Back Room one Pair |
| John Harris | 1800 | Four post bedstead with rod and rail Tent bedstead with... a foot board Tent bedstead with party furniture Small turn up bedstead Tent bedstead Four post bedstead with carved and reeded feet posts | Right Hand Room One Pair Left Hand Room Left Hand Room Middle Room N ^o 4 Middle Room N ^o 10 Back Bed Room |
| Nicholas Browning | 1800 | Beech stump bedsted with a sacking bottom Beech stained bedstead with a sacking bottom Beech bedsted with sacking bottom Four post bedsted | Two pair of Stairs South Room North Chamber up one pair of Stairs Maids Room Back chamber |
| John Sears | 1800 | Mahogany four Post Bedstead Four Post Bedstead A Mahogany Four Post Bedstead Four Post Bedstead Four Post Bedstead A Bedstead a half Tester | Front Garret Back Garret Front Bed Room Back Room 2 pair Back Room 2 pair Back Room 2 pair |

Appendix 3b: Servant Sample.

| Year | Name | Occupation | Rooms | Value household | Rooms | Bedsteads | Beds | Value | % of whole |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|-------|-----------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1706 | William Willis | Mercer | 16 | £526.2.4 | Servants 1 Servants 2 Servants 3 Servants 4 Coachman | 1 1 1 1 2 | 1 1 1 1 2 | £5.11.- £4.16.- £3.8.- £3.5.- £4.10.- | 1.2 % 1 % 0.6% 0.6% 1% |
| 1707 | Joshua Sabin | Weaver | 10 | £952.16.10 | Men's room | | 1 | - | - |
| 1709 | William, Durrant | Embroiderer | 10 | £311.5.- | Servants hall | - | - | £4.-.- | 1.3% |
| 1713/4 | Booth | Soapmaker | 7 | £484.17.10 | Maids rooms | 2 | 1 | £2.-.- | 0.4% |
| 1726 | John Alsop | Vintner | - | £200.-.- | Maid's room Men's garret Maid's room | 1 3 1 | - 2 1 | - - - | - - - |
| 1733 | Thomas Hyde | Mercer | 11 | - | Coachman | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 1740 | William Snelling | Salter | 15 | £2546.6.6 | Maid's garret Men's garret Coachman | 2 2 1 | 5 2 1 | £12.5.- £9.16.- £4.-.- | 0.4% 0.4% 0.2% |
| 1752 | Richard Knight | ? | 7 | £306.15.6 | Maids garret Man's garret | 1 2 | 2 2 | £3.3.- £4.-.- | 1% 1.3% |
| 1761 | Christian Tiethen | Sugar Baker | 10 | £161.5.- | Men's lodging | 3 | 3 | - | - |
| 1772 | Thomas Robinson | ? | 10 | £273.12.6 | Mans garret Maids room | 1 1 | 1 2 | - - | - - |
| 1778 | Richard Davies | Coffee house | - | £215.15.6 | Waites room Maids room | 1 1 | 1 2 | - - | - - |
| 1800 | Nicholas Browning | Baker | 11 | £491.-.- | Maids room | 1 | 2 | 6.8.- | 1.2% |

Appendix 3c: Garret Sample

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----|-----------|------------------------|---|---|----------|-------|
| 1740 | Luke Hepworth | - | 9 | - | Ffore garret righ hand | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| | | | | | Ffore Garret Left hand | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 1740 | John Mitford | - | 11 | - | In A Garrett | 1 | 3 | - | - |
| 1740 | William Snelling | Salter | 13 | £2546.6.6 | Wainscoat Garrett | 1 | 1 | £6.16.- | 0.5% |
| 40 | William Crawford | Master of Merchant Ship | 6 | £92.-.8 | Fore garrett | 1 | 1 | £10.14.- | 11.6% |
| | | | | | Back Garrett | 2 | 1 | £1.10.- | 1.6% |
| 1744 | Benjamin Tice | Baker | 9 | £68.11.6 | Fore Garrat | 1 | 1 | £1.1.- | 1.5% |
| 1745 | Francis Gibson | Painter? | 7 | £217.13.- | Fore garret No 2 | 1 | 1 | £3.18.- | 18.3% |
| 1746 | George Bratwaite | Goldsmith | 7 | - | Back Garet | 1 | 1 | £1.8.- | - |
| 1746 | Jonathan Jekyll | Watchmaker? | 6 | £77.3.11 | Fore Garrets | 2 | 2 | £2.17.- | 3.2% |
| 1746 | James Gooding | Saddler? | 7 | £96.12.6 | back Garrett | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 1746 | Thomas Hill | Vintner? | 10 | £1687.3.- | Ffront Garret | 1 | 1 | £2.19.- | 1% |
| | | | 11 | | Garret adjoining | 2 | 2 | £1.5.- | 0.4% |
| | | | | | Middle Garret | 1 | 1 | £-.19.- | 0.3% |
| 1748 | William Hiccocks | Cheesmonger? | 5 | £128.10.4 | Garret | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 1749 | John Brice | Draper? | 7 | £1372.15 | Back Garret | 1 | 2 | - | - |
| | | | | | Fore Garret | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 1749 | Thomas Shackleton | - | 4 | £100.15 | Garretts | 2 | 1 | £2.-.- | 2% |
| 1752 | Stephen Dobbs | Poulterer? | 3 | £47.-.- | Garret | 1 | 1 | £1.7.6 | 2.9% |
| 1752 | Richard Knight | - | 7 | £306.15.6 | Garret forward | 1 | 1 | £10.13.6 | 3.5% |
| 1756 | Benjamin Axford | - | 7 | - | Garrets | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 1761 | Christian Tiethen | Sugar Baker | 8 | £161.5. | Back Garrat | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 1764 | Wilkinson | Watchmaker | 7 | £65.3.0 | Back Garret | 2 | 1 | - | - |
| | Crumpton | | | | Garret at Stairhead | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 1772 | Thomas Robinson | - | 10 | £275.12.6 | Paper Garret | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 1778 | Richard Davies | Coffee house? | 8 | £333.4.6 | Garret | 1 | 1 | £5.10.- | 1.7% |
| 1780 | George Perring | Gardener | 6 | - | East Garret | 2 | 2 | - | - |
| | | | | | South Garret | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 1781 | William and Elizabeth Willson | Public house keeper | - | £190.4.9 | Garret | 1 | 2 | - | - |
| 1782 | James Waller | Esq | 10 | - | Back garrett | 1 | | - | - |

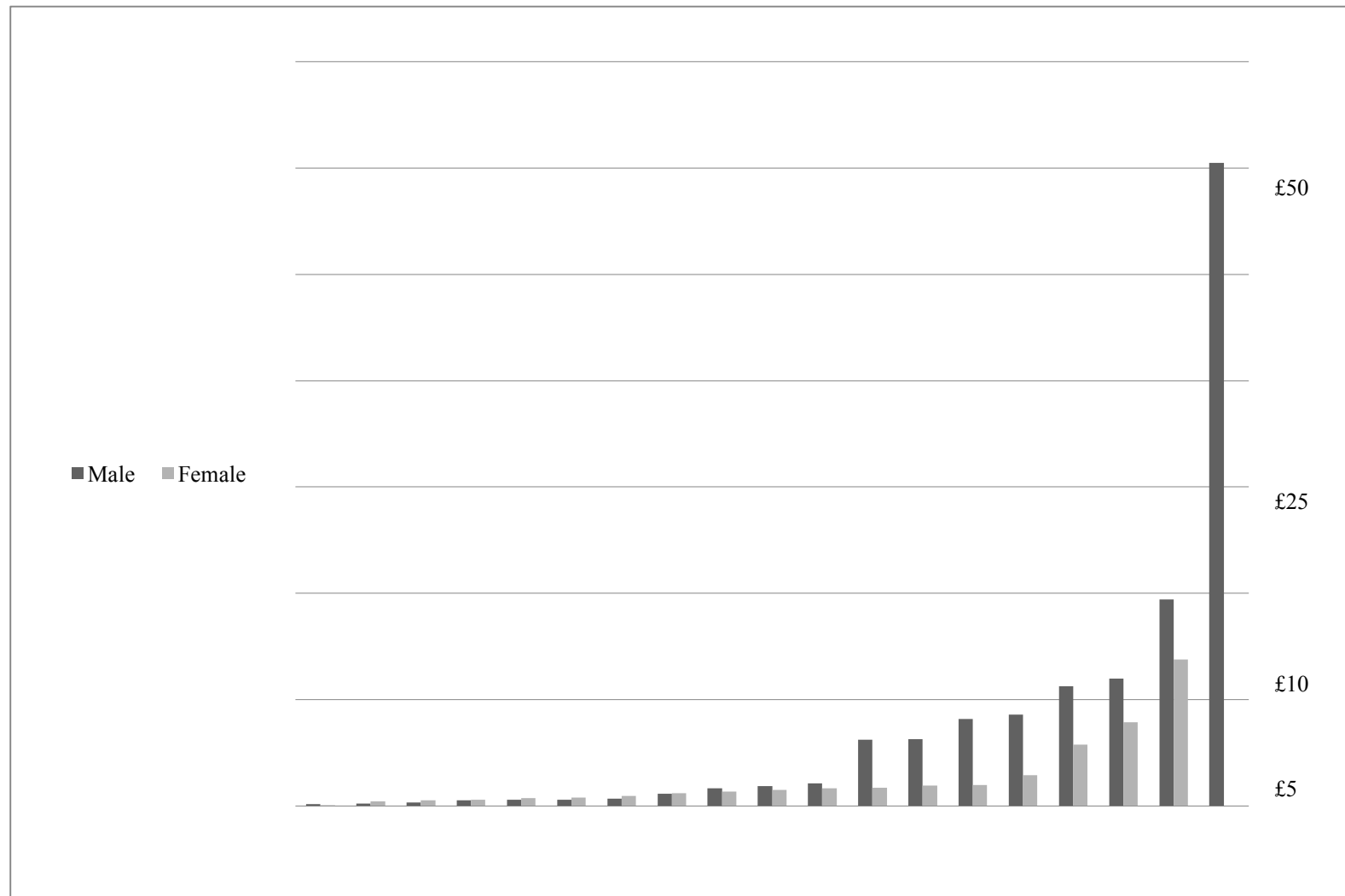
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|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----|------------|---|-------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|
| 1785 | William Chenery | Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer | 7 | - | Back Garret Adjoining | 1 2 | 1 3 | - - | - - |
| 1786 | John Jackson | Esq. Grocer? | 9 | £274.18.6 | Back Garret | 2 | 2 | - | - |
| 1793 | William George Blachford | | 8 | £309.9.- | Back Garrett | 3 | 3 | - | - |
| 1796 | James Blatch | Linen Draper | 8 | £1113.6.4. | Left hand Garrett Right Garrett | 1 2 | 1 2 | £10.7.4 £2.19.- | 0.9% 0.2% |
| 1800 | Gawler Gryffyth Rickman | | 10 | £589.-.- | Front Attick Back Attick Rich Hand front attick | 1 1 1 | 1 2 2 | - - - | - - - |
| 1800 | John Sears | Turner? | 7 | £579.15.- | Front Garrett | 1 | 1 | - | - |

Appendix 4a: Stolen boxes

| OBP ref | Servant's name | Sex | Stolen from | Stolen from | Locked? | Value of box | Value of contents |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| t17560225-8 | Edward Hanson | M | in place | stable | - | £-.2.- | £-9- |
| t17581025-24 | William Somerfield | M | in place | stable | y | - | £5.4.- |
| t17600416-14 | Eleanor Trotter | F | past place | - | y | - | - |
| t17620114-22 | Hannah Taylor | F | brother's house | - | - | - | £-.1.3 |
| t17640113-42 | Jane Roudlidge | F | in place | my room | Y | - | - |
| t17641017-11 | John payne | M | in place | my room | Y | - | £10.-.- |
| t17650227-43 | Hugh Faulkner | M | in place | - | - | - | - |
| t17651211-45 | Anne Adamson | F | in place | kitchen | Y | - | £1.8.- |
| t17660409-5 | Peter Weskett | M | brother's house | - | - | - | £-.10.- |
| t17661217-31 | John Wood | M | lodging | - | Y | - | £-.4.- |
| t17671209-34 | John Hunt | M | lodging | - | - | - | £-.19.2 |
| t17681207-3 | John Tapping | M | in place | stable | Y | - | £1.10.12 |
| t17710410-59 | James Watson | M | in place | stable | - | - | £1.11.- |
| t17720603-11 | Edward Wotton | M | between place | coach | - | - | - |
| t17740706-44 | Ann Jeff | F | in place | my room | - | £-.1.- | £1.13.- |
| t7760417-4 | John Clinkard | M | in place | - | - | - | £1.15.- |
| t17760522-34 | George Turner | M | in place | stable | Y | - | £-.11.- |
| t17770409-5 | Elizabeth Curtis | F | in place | - | - | - | £1.5.- |
| t17780218-44 | Patience Hughes | F | in place | - | - | - | £-.15.6 |
| t17780218-48 | Alexander Foubister | M | in place | - | - | - | £50.8.- |
| t17780715-37 | Catherine Jones | F | in place | my room | N | - | £1.11.8 |
| t17790217-34 | Henry Johnson | M | in place | stable | Y | - | £9.8.- |
| t17810912-4 | Mary Dodd | F | in place | my room | - | - | £-.12.3 |
| t17820109-1 | Margaret Cameron | F | in place | my room | Y | - | £-.7.- |
| t17830226-49 | Mary Lee | F | in place | my room | N | - | £1.8.6 |
| t17831210-53 | William Bryant | M | in place | servants hall | - | £-.2.- | £7.3.6 |
| t17850914-114 | Rachael Blackburn | F | between place | errand cart | Y | £-.1.- | £1.2.7 |
| t17860830-85 | Pamela Clark | F | between place | Exchange | - | - | £1.8.- |
| t17890603-43 | Clement Rowe | M | in place | - | Y | - | £16.3.7 |
| t17890603-54 | Edward Pipe | m | in place | - | - | - | £-.5.2 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---|----------------|---------|---|--------|---------|
| t17900526-72 | Mary Power | f | in place | - | Y | - | £-.10.- |
| t17900915-49 | Sarah Saunders | f | in place | - | N | - | £-.13.- |
| t17910914-33 | Mary Harrison | f | lodging | - | Y | - | £-.8.6 |
| t17950416-78 | William King | m | in place | my room | - | - | £-.3.- |
| t17950416-4 | Francis Davis | m | in place | my room | Y | - | £-.10.- |
| t17950520-35 | Sarah Stent | f | in place | my room | Y | - | £6.10.9 |
| t17950520-34 | Lucy Stockford | f | lodging | - | Y | - | £4.16.- |
| t17950701-70 | Mary Savage | f | between places | - | Y | £-.4.- | £11.9.3 |
| t17971206-41 | Edward Brazier | m | in place | bedroom | Y | - | £6.16.- |
| t17991204-41 | Elizabeth Harvey | f | between places | cart | - | £-.6 | £6.2.8 |
| t18000917-104 | Mary Duffey | f | in place | kitchen | N | - | £1.-.- |

Appendix 4b: Graph to show value of goods stolen from servants' boxes from sample from *OBP*, arranged in ascending order by gender (boxes with no value have been excluded)



Appendix 5a: Goods Identified by Male Servants, 1750-1800

| OBP ref | Servant's name | Object as listed in indictment | Value | Category |
|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| t17600116-15 | William Gunston | 8 handkerchiefs | / | stock-in-trade |
| t17600116-23 | William Bridgewater | ten ounce green tea | 6d | stock-in-trade |
| t17600116-27 | Philip Trigg | 56 pounds weight of butter | 20s | stock-in-trade |
| t17700117-2 | William Knibbs | silver candlestick | 4l | domestic utensil |
| t17700117-10 | John Chambers | gold watch | 20l | apparel and linen |
| t17700117-28 | John Garside | lump sugar | 17s | misc |
| t17700117-36 | Germine Le Court | 7 yards of velvet | 3l | apparel and linen |
| t17700117-36 | Germine Le Court | a yard and a half of gold tissue | / | apparel and linen |
| t17700117-36 | Germine Le Court | six yards of printed cotton. | / | apparel and linen |
| t17900113-6 | William Thurston | two pieces of velveteen | 10l | stock-in-trade |
| t17900113-23 | Percival Ewer | two silver forks | 20s | domestic utensil |
| t17900113-27 | James Burrows | four yards of printed cotton | 5s | stock-in-trade |
| t17900113-51 | Thomas Shales | pair of coach-harness | 20s | misc |
| t17900113-68 | James Hardy | deal box | 1s | stock-in-trade |
| t17900113-68 | James Hardy | twenty-four pounds weight of starch | 15d | stock-in-trade |
| t17900113-68 | James Hardy | seven pounds weight of salt | 4d | stock-in-trade |
| t17900113-68 | James Hardy | three pounds of sal prunella | 2s | stock-in-trade |
| t17900113-68 | James Hardy | four quires of emery paper | 4s | stock-in-trade |
| t17900113-68 | James Hardy | twenty-five red herrings | 2s | stock-in-trade |
| t18000115-7 | William Wellings | canvas bag | 1s. 6d. | apparel and linen |
| t18000115-15 | Thomas Meredith | eighteen yards of fustian | 18s | stock-in-trade |
| t18000115-19 | Jacob Grimes | a band-box | 2d | apparel and linen |
| t18000115-19 | Jacob Grimes | a silk sash | 42s | apparel and linen |
| t18000115-19 | Jacob Grimes | a helmet cap | 21s | apparel and linen |

| | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|--|-------|-------------------|
| t18000115-19 | Jacob Grimes | a jacket | 21s | apparel and linen |
| t18000115-33 | George Kinghorn | a gun | 10l | misc |
| t18000115-64 | John Eyre | flat | 2s | stock-in-trade |
| t18000115-65 | Isaac Crocker | bag | 1s | stock-in-trade |
| t18000115-65 | Isaac Crocker | six pounds of coffee | 15s | stock-in-trade |
| t18000115-65 | Isaac Crocker | twenty-two pounds of tea | 4l 8s | stock-in-trade |
| t17700117-2 | William Knibbs | silver candlestick | 4l | domestic utensil |
| t17690405-17 | Robert Sherry | two silver salts | 20s | domestic utensil |
| t17720909-17 | Ghent, butler | silver saucepan | 10s | domestic utensil |
| t17810425-25 | Joseph Francis | silver top of a castor | 2s | domestic utensil |
| t17821016-3 | William Sherman | one pair silver wax candlesticks | 40s | domestic utensil |
| t17821016-3 | William Sherman | silver half pint mug | 30s | domestic utensil |
| t17821016-3 | William Sherman | silver cream pot | 20s | domestic utensil |
| t17821016-3 | William Sherman | one piece of a broken silver table spoon | 5s | domestic utensil |
| t17821016-3 | William Sherman | two silver handles of a knife case | 5s | domestic utensil |
| t17821016-3 | William Sherman | one silver foot of a knife case | 1s | domestic utensil |
| t17901208-31 | Christian Miller | tinder box | 1d | domestic utensil |
| t17920215-42 | Francis Upcott | one pair of silk stockings | 12s | stock-in-trade |
| t17970215-48 | Miller | hammercloth | 3l 3s | misc |
| t17570223-43 | William Rose | worsted stockings | 4s | apparel and linen |
| t17660903-27 | James Bray | two silver desert spoons | 10s | domestic utensil |
| t17780916-7 | Andrew Elder | eight pieces of leather for boot legs | 20s | apparel and linen |
| t17801018-11 | John Plomer | a case knife with a silver handle | 2s | domestic utensil |
| t17801018-11 | John Plomer | a case fork with a silver handle | 2s | domestic utensil |
| t17801018-11 | John Plomer | two cloth coats | 40s | apparel and linen |
| t17801018-11 | John Plomer | two cloth waistcoats | 15s | apparel and linen |
| t17801018-11 | John Plomer | silk breeches | 40s | apparel and linen |

| | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|---|-------|-------------------|
| t17801018-11 | John Plomer | cloth great coat | 20s | apparel and linen |
| t17801018-11 | John Plomer | silk stockings | 8s | apparel and linen |
| t17801018-11 | John Plomer | leather shoes | 5s | apparel and linen |
| t17801018-11 | John Plomer | linen table cloth | 1s | apparel and linen |
| t17920523-7 | Richard Cowley | cock pigeons hen pigeons | 30s | misc |
| t17920523-7 | Edward Edward | cock pigeons hen pigeons | 30s | misc |
| t17931030-82 | Inglis | silver table spoon | 8s | domestic utensil |
| t17931030-82 | Inglis | two silver tea spoons | 3s | domestic utensil |
| t17551204-13 | Edward Snowball | 1 pair of silk stockings | | apparel and linen |
| t17551204-13 | Edward Snowball | 1 shag waistcoat | | apparel and linen |
| t17551204-13 | Edward Snowball | 1 cloth coat | | apparel and linen |
| t17551204-13 | Edward Snowball | 1 cloth waistcoat | | apparel and linen |
| t17570114-10 | Henry Spencer | one silver spoon | 12s | domestic utensil |
| t17640113-8 | William Stevens | one silver table spoon | 10s | domestic utensil |
| t17760710-59 | Joseph Smith | cloth coat with silver buttons | 3l 3s | apparel and linen |
| t17760710-59 | Joseph Smith | corded silk waistcoat embroidered with gold | 15s | apparel and linen |
| t17760710-59 | Joseph Smith | silk breeches | 5s | apparel and linen |
| t17760710-59 | Joseph Smith | cloth waistcoat with silver buttons | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t17760710-59 | Joseph Smith | two silver forks | 20s | domestic utensil |
| t17760710-59 | Joseph Smith | two silver coffee spoons | 5s | domestic utensil |
| t17790915-7 | Barnet Ellis | silver tea spoon | 18d | domestic utensil |
| t17810222-13 | James Combes | hammer cloth | 30s | misc |
| t17820220-36 | Charles Knight | one hair trunk | 4s | misc |
| t17831210-15 | John Harding | one linen shirt 10s | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t17900526-45 | William Beeby | silk waistcoat | 4s | apparel and linen |
| t18000709-24 | Scrivens | four hen fowls | 8s | misc |
| t18000402-44 | Thomas Capps | box coat | 10s | misc |

| | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---|-------|-------------------|
| t17571026-18 | Barnaby Campbell | four cheeses | 20s | stock-in-trade |
| t17580113-23 | William Budd | one silver candlestick | 20s | domestic utensil |
| t17580113-23 | William Budd | one silver extinguisher | 3s | domestic utensil |
| t17580113-23 | William Budd | seven silver spoons | 20s | domestic utensil |
| t17631207-18 | Edward Argell | sheep | | misc |
| t17661022-39 | Edward Bracebridge | mahogany tea-chest | | domestic utensil |
| t17661022-39 | Edward Bracebridge | two tin canisters | | domestic utensil |
| t17661022-39 | Edward Bracebridge | two silver spoons | | domestic utensil |
| t17710410-27 | George Guinnet | five silver tea spoons | | domestic utensil |
| t17710410-27 | George Guinnet | silver ladle | 20s | domestic utensil |
| t17710410-27 | George Guinnet | four silver table spoons | | domestic utensil |
| t17830115-38 | William Seleoder | eight silver table spoons | 3l 3s | domestic utensil |
| t17861213-129 | John More | one woollen cloth great coat, called a box coat | 20s | apparel and linen |
| t17861213-129 | John More | livery coat | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t17861213-129 | John More | livery waistcoat | 5s | apparel and linen |
| t17930529-15 | Thomas Box | three silver table spoons | 1l10s | domestic utensil |
| t17930529-15 | Thomas Box | two silver salt spoons | 4s | domestic utensil |
| t17930529-20 | Bartholomew Nicholls | coachman's cloth coat | 1l | apparel and linen |

Appendix 5b: Goods Identified by Female Servants, 1750-1800

| OBP ref | Servant's name | Object as listed in indictment | Value | Category |
|----------------|-----------------------|---|--------------|-------------------|
| t17700117-37 | Francis Granton | two damask napkins | 3s | apparel and linen |
| t17800112-16 | Ann Green | woollen cloth coat | 5s | apparel and linen |
| t17800112-16 | Ann Green | a woollen cloth waistcoat | 5s | apparel and linen |
| t17800112-16 | Ann Green | a pair of worsted stockings | 2d | apparel and linen |
| t17800112-16 | Ann Green | a silk gown | 8s | apparel and linen |
| t17800112-16 | Ann Green | a pair of linen sleeves | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17800112-16 | Ann Green | a silk petticoat | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t17800112-16 | Ann Green | a printed book bound in leather | 1s | misc |
| t17800112-16 | Ann Green | a yard of linen cloth | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17800112-16 | Ann Green | a pair of women's stuff shoes | 3d | apparel and linen |
| t17800112-26 | Mary Bond | two linen handkerchiefs | 1s | stock-in-trade |
| t17800112-26 | Mary Bond | three pairs of linen sleeve | 18d | stock-in-trade |
| t17800112-26 | Mary Bond | three linen stocks | 6d | stock-in-trade |
| t17900113-7 | Priscilla Rayner | six pewter dishes | 40s | stock-in-trade |
| t17900113-7 | Priscilla Rayner | a handkerchief | 1s | stock-in-trade |
| t17900113-58 | Ann Taylor | eight silver table spoons | 4l | domestic utensil |
| t17900113-58 | Ann Taylor | four silver desert spoons | 20s | domestic utensil |
| t17900113-58 | Ann Taylor | two silver tea spoons | 3s | domestic utensil |
| t18000115-43 | Mary Bean | a silver table spoon | 13s | domestic utensil |
| t18000115-43 | Mary Bean | four silver teaspoons | 13s | domestic utensil |
| t18000115-43 | Mary Bean | one hundred and twenty six penny pieces | 126d | misc |
| t18000115-43 | Mary Bean | two hundred and fifty nine half pence | 129d | misc |
| t18000115-43 | Mary Bean | three farthings | | misc |
| t18000115-43 | Mary Bean | a quarter pound of tea | 1s 6d | misc |

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|
| t18000115-43 | Mary Bean | ounce of rhubarb | 6d | misc |
| t18000115-43 | Mary Bean | base metal salt holder | 1s | domestic utensil |
| t18000115-43 | Mary Bean | two wooden drawers | 2s | misc |
| t18000115-82 | Sarah Winter | sheet | 5s | stock-in-trade |
| t17910216-31 | Alice Chamside | eight pounds and a quarter of mutton | 6s | misc |
| t17910216-31 | Alice Chamside | six pounds and a quarter of beef | 3s6d | misc |
| t17910216-31 | Alice Chamside | three pounds and a quarter of pork | 2s | misc |
| t17910608-17 | Catherine Willis | one silver fork | 11s | domestic utensil |
| t17910720-39 | Ann Airs | two silver table spoons | 1l | domestic utensil |
| t17911026-27 | Elizabeth Roberts | three pieces of cotton furniture | 2s | stock-in-trade |
| t17911026-27 | Elizabeth Roberts | Marseilles petticoat | 12d | stock-in-trade |
| t17911026-27 | Elizabeth Roberts | dimity ditto [petticoat] | 2s | stock-in-trade |
| t17911026-27 | Elizabeth Roberts | Check apron | 6d | stock-in-trade |
| t17911026-27 | Elizabeth Roberts | Cotton bed gown | 6d | stock-in-trade |
| t17911026-27 | Elizabeth Roberts | stockings | 6d | stock-in-trade |
| t17920113-12 | Mary Peel | three pint pots | 3s 6d | stock-in-trade |
| t17920113-12 | Mary Peel | two quart pewter pots | 3s 6d | stock-in-trade |
| t17930220-84 | Francis Oliver | four linen table cloths | 15s | stock-in-trade |
| t17930220-84 | Francis Oliver | two tea spoons | 4s | stock-in-trade |
| t17930410-19 | Elizabeth Rey | a china bason, value | 4d | stock-in-trade |
| t17930911-45 | Elizabeth Thomas | twenty five copper farthings | | stock-in-trade |
| t17940430-39 | Sarah Emerson | pair of thread stockings value | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17940430-39 | Sarah Emerson | a quarter of a yard of muslin value | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17940604-30 | Hannah Watkinson | a man's cloth waistcoat | 4s | apparel and linen |
| t17950701-29 | Ester Mazey | three silver table spoons | 17s | domestic utensil |
| t17950701-29 | Ester Mazey | two silver salt spoons | 3s | domestic utensil |

| | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----|-------------------|
| t17951028-11 | Ann Topping | five mens linen shirts value | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t17951028-11 | Ann Topping | five linen napkins | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17951028-11 | Ann Topping | a linen table cloth | 3s | apparel and linen |
| t17951028-11 | Ann Topping | black silk petticoat | 1s | apparel and linen |
| t17951028-11 | Ann Topping | linen pillow case | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17951028-11 | Ann Topping | muslin handkerchief | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17961130-53 | Mary Sutherland | four yards of muslin | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t17750913-19 | Mary Hunter | four yards of white flannel | 4s | apparel and linen |
| t17750913-19 | Mary Hunter | two women's silk hats | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17750913-19 | Mary Hunter | woman's silk bonnet | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17750913-19 | Mary Hunter | seven yards of black shaloon | 3s | apparel and linen |
| t17750913-19 | Mary Hunter | 1 cheque linen aprons | 1s | apparel and linen |
| t17750913-19 | Mary Hunter | 2 white linen aprons | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17750913-19 | Mary Hunter | a silk handkerchief | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17750913-19 | Mary Hunter | linen handkerchief | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17850406-50 | Alice Newton | two yards of painted floor cloth | 9s | stock-in-trade |
| t17890603-9 | Hannah Taylor | loaf | 6d | misc |
| t17890603-9 | Hannah Taylor | three china plates | 1s | domestic utensil |
| t17890603-9 | Hannah Taylor | earthen ware butter boat | 2d | domestic utensil |
| t17900113-29 | Sarah Lemon | one check linen apron | 14d | apparel and linen |
| t17900113-29 | Sarah Lemon | one linen ditto [apron] | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17900113-29 | Sarah Lemon | stuff petticoat | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17900113-29 | Sarah Lemon | dimity bed gown | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17900113-29 | Sarah Lemon | pair of stuff shoes | 2d | apparel and linen |
| t17940115-31 | Hannah Baynham | six cotton night shirts | 6s | apparel and linen |
| t17940115-31 | Hannah Baynham | two linen aprons | 5s | apparel and linen |

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|--------------|-----------------|---|-----|-------------------|
| t17940115-31 | Hannah Baynham | cotton night shifts | 6s | apparel and linen |
| t17940115-31 | Hannah Baynham | cotton waistcoat | 1d | apparel and linen |
| t17940115-31 | Hannah Baynham | table cloths | 5s | apparel and linen |
| t17980110-20 | Ann Hornsby | tea spoon | | domestic utensil |
| t17980704-15 | Ann Atkins | copper | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t17980704-15 | Sarah Todd | copper | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t17990911-27 | Mary Sullivan | linen sheet | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t17990911-27 | Sarah Baker | linen sheet | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t18001203-35 | Mary Smith | one linen shirt | 8s | stock-in-trade |
| t17520914-39 | Elizabeth Hart | two linen shirts | | apparel and linen |
| t17570223-43 | Ann Swan | linen handkerchief | | apparel and linen |
| t17570223-43 | Ann Swan | three pair of worstead stockings | 4s | apparel and linen |
| t17570223-43 | Ann Swan | neckclock | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17590425-14 | Elizabeth Sole | five linen stocks | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17590425-14 | Mary Davis | two silver teaspoons | 2s | domestic utensil |
| t17590425-14 | Mary Davis | silver tea tongs | 2s | domestic utensil |
| t17590425-14 | Mary Davis | silver tea-strainer | 1s | domestic utensil |
| t17690906-12 | Sarah Metcalf | copper pot | 10s | domestic utensil |
| t17690906-12 | Sarah Metcalf | copper saucepan | 3s | domestic utensil |
| t17690906-12 | Sarah Metcalf | copper tea kettle | 3s | domestic utensil |
| t17720603-5 | Arabella Knight | gauze sack and petticoat with silk and gold flowers | 5l | apparel and linen |
| t17720603-5 | Arabella Knight | three silk sacks and petticoats | 10l | apparel and linen |
| t17720603-5 | Arabella Knight | one silk night gown | 40s | apparel and linen |
| t17720603-5 | Arabella Knight | one brocaded silk night gown | 5l | apparel and linen |
| t17871212-69 | Martha Brewer | seven linen sheet s | 35s | apparel and linen |
| t17871212-69 | Martha Brewer | four napkins | 5s | apparel and linen |

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|--------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|------|-------------------|
| t17871212-69 | Martha Brewer | eight diaper table-cloths | 40s | apparel and linen |
| t17890422-15 | Jane Doer | two silver tablespoons | 20s | domestic utensil |
| t17551204-13 | Jane Baterson | one silver saucepan | 15s | domestic utensil |
| t17551204-13 | Jane Baterson | linen table cloth | 7s | apparel and linen |
| t17551204-13 | Jane Baterson | 2 linen shirts | | apparel and linen |
| t17551204-13 | Jane Baterson | 1 damask napkin | | apparel and linen |
| t17551204-13 | Jane Baterson | 1 pair velvet breeches | | apparel and linen |
| t17551204-13 | Jane Baterson | 1 pair of silk stockings | | apparel and linen |
| t17551204-13 | Jane Baterson | 1 shag waistcoat | | apparel and linen |
| t17551204-13 | Jane Baterson | 1 cloth coat | | apparel and linen |
| t17551204-13 | Jane Baterson | 1 cloth waistcoat | | apparel and linen |
| t17650116-36 | Sarah Manley | a silver waiter | | domestic utensil |
| t17650116-36 | Elizabeth Cook | silver cup | 20s | domestic utensil |
| t17650116-36 | Elizabeth Cook | silver boat | | domestic utensil |
| t17650227-45 | Elizabeth Carter | copper tea-kettle | 2s6d | domestic utensil |
| t17710410-44 | Mary Stelwood | three pair of silk stockings | 24s | apparel and linen |
| t17770219-9 | Mary Goodyer | one silk damask bocatied woman's gown | 5l | apparel and linen |
| t17510116-65 | Ann Clements | two linen gowns | 1s | apparel and linen |
| t17550409-7 | Elisabeth Walker | linen apron | | apparel and linen |
| t17550910-12 | Sarah Ash | one cotton gown | 7s | stock-in-trade |
| t17551204-12 | Mary Steward | 3 aprons | 3s | apparel and linen |
| t17551204-12 | Mary Steward | 1 gown | 12d | apparel and linen |
| t17570420-26 | Mary Hawkins | one linen shift | 12d | apparel and linen |
| t17570420-26 | Mary Hawkins | one quilted petticoat | 12s | apparel and linen |
| t17570420-26 | Mary Hawkins | five clouts | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17570420-26 | Mary Hawkins | one piece linen | 1s | apparel and linen |

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|--------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----|-------------------|
| t17580113-23 | Esther Woolen | eleven diaper tablecloths | | apparel and linen |
| t17580113-23 | Esther Woolen | three diaper napkins | | apparel and linen |
| t17580113-23 | Esther Woolen | one callico bed quilt | | apparel and linen |
| t17580113-23 | Esther Woolen | six cotton curtains | | apparel and linen |
| t17580405-2 | Anne Peirce | ten silver spoons | 50s | domestic utensil |
| t17580405-2 | Anne Peirce | four silver salts | 20s | domestic utensil |
| t17580405-2 | Anne Peirce | one silver pepper box | 5s | domestic utensil |
| t17580405-2 | Anne Peirce | one silver cream pot | 5s | domestic utensil |
| t17580405-2 | Anne Peirce | one silver boat | 2s | domestic utensil |
| t17580405-2 | Anne Peirce | one silver punch-ladel | 5s | domestic utensil |
| t17580405-2 | Anne Peirce | two silver mugs | 40s | domestic utensil |
| t17610625-15 | Mary Johnson | one silver shoe buckle | 5s | apparel and linen |
| t17611021-31 | Mary Ellice | one towel | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17611021-31 | Mary Ellice | one china cup | 1d | domestic utensil |
| t17611021-31 | Mary Ellice | linen handkerchief | 1s | apparel and linen |
| t17611209-4 | Elizabeth Anson | four linen naplins | 4s | apparel and linen |
| t17611209-4 | Elizabeth Anson | three linen table cloths | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17611209-4 | Elizabeth Anson | one linen handkerchief | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17611209-4 | Elizabeth Anson | one linen shift | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17611209-4 | Elizabeth Anson | one towel | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17620224-4 | Elizabeth Hall | one cap | 1s | apparel and linen |
| t17620224-4 | Elizabeth Hall | one handkerchief | 1s | apparel and linen |
| t17650116-26 | Mary Fry | eight damask napkins | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t17650116-26 | Mary Fry | four linen handkerchiefs | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17650116-26 | Mary Fry | and two silk handkerchiefs | 3s | apparel and linen |
| t17650918-10 | Susannah Yarman | four silver tea spoons | 10s | domestic utensil |

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|--------------|-----------------|---|------|-------------------|
| t17690112-28 | Mary Pearce | pair of steel snuffers | 1s | domestic utensil |
| t17690112-28 | Mary Pearce | silver snuffer stand | 5s | domestic utensil |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | one pair of stays | 8s | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | one dimmitty robe | 12d | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | one cotton robe | 12d | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | three linen handkerchiefs | 6d | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | two cotton handkerchiefs | 12d | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | pair of linen sleeves | 2d | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | two linen aprons | 2s | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | four linen childrens frocks | 3s | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | one child's cotton gown | 6d | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | one child's dimity cloak | 18d | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | one child's dimity shirt | 18d | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | one calamanco woman's shoe | 6d | stock-in-trade |
| t17690628-3 | Jane Rutherford | one stuff damask woman's shoe | 6d | stock-in-trade |
| t17710410-27 | Mary Read | buckle case | | apparel and linen |
| t17760710-14 | Mary Hall | two linen neckcloths | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17760710-14 | Mary Hall | linen handkerchief | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17760710-14 | Mary Hall | silver table spoon | 10s | domestic utensil |
| t17770409-14 | Mary Jolliffe | leather pocket-book | 5s | misc |
| t17771203-13 | Sarah King | two hundred pieces of silk ribbon | 100l | apparel and linen |
| t17771203-13 | Sarah King | ten yards of plain gauze | 14s | apparel and linen |
| t17771203-13 | Sarah King | six hundred and ten yards of blond lace | 30l | apparel and linen |
| t17771203-13 | Sarah King | four hundred yards of black lace | 25l | apparel and linen |
| t17771203-13 | Sarah King | twelve hundred yards of white thread lace | 100l | apparel and linen |
| t17771203-13 | Sarah King | five hundred yards of white thread edging | 25l | apparel and linen |

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|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|-------------------|
| t17771203-13 | Sarah King | one hundred yards of Persian silk | 7l | apparel and linen |
| t17780916-20 | Sarah Jennings | silver pepper castor | 10s | stock-in-trade |
| t17780916-20 | Sarah Jennings | silver table spoon | 6s | stock-in-trade |
| t17791020-24 | Sarah Thompson | silver pint mug | 3l | domestic utensil |
| t17791020-24 | Sarah Thompson | silver half pint mug | 39s | domestic utensil |
| t17791020-24 | Sarah Thompson | 3 silver table spoon s | 24s | domestic utensil |
| t17791020-24 | Sarah Thompson | six silver tea spoon s | 12s | domestic utensil |
| t17791020-24 | Sarah Thompson | pair of silver salts | 30s | domestic utensil |
| t17791020-24 | Sarah Thompson | pair of silver tea tongs | 5s | domestic utensil |
| t17810530-40 | Martha Haslam | linen housewife | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17840707-76 | Elizabeth Brigden | one small dimity coat | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17840707-76 | Elizabeth Brigden | one pair white cotton stockings | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17840707-76 | Elizabeth Brigden | four clouts | 1s | apparel and linen |
| t17840707-76 | Elizabeth Brigden | one linen stock | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t17840707-76 | Elizabeth Brigden | pair of small curtains | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17851019-9 | Mary Dent | two silver table spoons | 14s | domestic utensil |
| t17851019-9 | Jane Johnson | two silver table spoons | 14s | domestic utensil |
| t17860531-62 | Elizabeth Hare | boiling copper | 30s | domestic utensil |
| t17860531-62 | Elizabeth Hare | one apron | 1s | apparel and linen |
| t17860531-62 | Elizabeth Hare | one towell | 1d | apparel and linen |
| t17870418-35 | Mary Carpenter | silver tea spoon | 1s | domestic utensil |
| t17880625-78 | Elizabeth Sibley | three pictures, framed and glazed | 3s | misc |
| t17880625-78 | Elizabeth Sibley | one linen towel | 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17890422-60 | Ann Baverstock | two muslin aprons | 4s | apparel and linen |
| t17900915-47 | Catherine Symonds | a copper quart pot | 3s | domestic utensil |
| t17901027-28 | Ann Craft | several articles of linen | 2l | apparel and linen |

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|--------------|------------------|--|-------|-------------------|
| t17930529-27 | Mary Smith | two pair of shoe buckles | 1110s | apparel and linen |
| t17930529-27 | Mary Smith | base metal watch | 2l | apparel and linen |
| t17930529-27 | Mary Smith | base metal watch chain, gilt with gold | 1s | apparel and linen |
| t17930529-27 | Mary Smith | gold seal | 8s | apparel and linen |
| t17930911-48 | Mary Upton | silver table spoon | 5s | domestic utensil |
| t17930911-48 | Mary Upton | three silver tea spoon | 3s | domestic utensil |
| t17940917-75 | Elizabeth Sutton | silver watch | 2l | apparel and linen |
| t17940917-75 | Elizabeth Sutton | metal watch key | 1d | apparel and linen |
| t17940917-75 | Elizabeth Sutton | black mode cloak | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t17940917-75 | Elizabeth Sutton | dimity petticoat | 2s 6d | apparel and linen |
| t17940917-75 | Elizabeth Sutton | two cotton shawls | 5s | apparel and linen |
| t17950520-20 | Moriah Boterelli | two silver table spoons | 111s | domestic utensil |
| t17950520-20 | Moriah Boterelli | silver pap spoon | 5s | domestic utensil |
| t17950520-20 | Moriah Boterelli | seven silver tea spoons | 10s | domestic utensil |
| t17991030-12 | Ann Galloway | five sheets | 1l | apparel and linen |
| t18000402-59 | Jane Lee | five shirts | 10s | apparel and linen |
| t18000402-59 | Jane Lee | sheet 5s | 5s | apparel and linen |
| t18000402-59 | Jane Lee | table cloth | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t18000402-59 | Jane Lee | two pillow cases | 2s | apparel and linen |
| t18000402-59 | Jane Lee | five pockets | 1s | apparel and linen |
| t18000402-59 | Jane Lee | naplin | 2d | apparel and linen |
| t18000402-59 | Jane Lee | check apron | 2s | apparel and linen |

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British Museum, London

Draft Trade Card for William Robertson, trunk maker, Heal, 120.67-70 and D,
2.4022

Trade Card for William Robertson, trunk and plate maker, 2006, U.739

Geffrye Museum, London

Selected prints:

Philip Dawe, (after John Foldson), *Female Lucubration*, (London, 1772), mezzotint,
93/2009

Philip Dawe (after Henry Morland), *The Laundry Maid*, (London, 1774), mezzotint,
94/2009

Valentine Green (after Edward Penny), *The Profligate Punished by Neglect and
Contempt*, (London, 1775), mezzotint, 92.2009

Selected objects:

Bow-fronted corner cupboard, japanned in blue and gold in imitation of East Asian
lacquer, probably made in Europe, c. 1720-c. 1740, 16/2006

Creamware plates with moulded lobed decoration on the rim, manufactured in
England by Wedgwood c. 1780-1795 2/2008-1-4

Large pewter plate with a reeded edge, marked with the initials 'FHM', made in
England before 1735, M 302

Salt-glazed stoneware cup and with overglaze enamel decoration of flowers in red,
pink, yellow, blue and green, part of a tea service probably made in
Staffordshire, c. 1760, 14/1980-2-1-2

Silver straining spoon with a pierced foliate design and a long thin stem, marked I.S
and made in London by Joseph Smith in c. 1720-1730 2/2008

Small pewter plate with single-reeded rim, made in England, c. 1700-1850 29.1937-
6b

Small pewter plate with a plain rim and a scribed cricile in the well, and foliate
decoration on the back, marked 'LONDON', made in England, c. 1700-1900,
M 300

Trunk made from wood covered in sealskin or horsehair made in the United
Kingdom, c. 1740-1800, GM, T126

Inventory transcripts:

William Willis, 1706, (LMA, CLA/002/02/01/2742); Joshua Sabin, 1707, (LMA,
CLA/002/02/01/2279); William Durrant, 1709, (LMA, CLA/002/02/01/2885); Caleb
Booth, 1714, (LMA, CLA/002/02/01/2982); John Alsop, 1726, (LMA,
CLA/002/02/01/3271); Thomas Hyde, 1733, (LMA, CLA/002/02/01/3338); Luke
Hepworth, 1740, (NA, C103/176); John Mitford, 1740, (NA, C113/11); William
Snelling, 1740, (LMA, CLA/002/02/01/3384); William Crawford, 1741, (NA, PROB
3/40/26); John Crich, 1741, (NA, C104/204); Benjamin Tice, 1744, (NA, C111/227);
Francis Gibson, 1746, (NA, PROB 3/45/17); George Bratwaite, 1746, (NA, C105/5);

Jonathan Jekyll, 1747, (NA, PROB 3/46/1); James Gooding, 1747, (NA, PROB 3/46/8); Thomas Hill, 1747, (NA, PROB 3/46/4); William Hiccocks, 1749, (NA, PROB 3/48/7); John Brice, 1750, (NA, C103/176); Thomas Shackleton, 1750, (NA, PROB 3/49/1); Thomas Ockleshaw, 1752, (NA, PROB3/51/3); Stephen Dobbs, 1752, (NA, PROB 3/51/6); Richard Knight, 1753, (NA, PROB 31/352/75); Elizabeth Sowton, 1753, (NA, PROB 3/52/12); George Woodrove, 1745 (NA, PROB 3/45/34); Benjamin Axford, 1756, (NA, C110/151); Christian Tiethen, 1742, (NA, C104/211); Wilkinson Crumpton, 1760, (NA, C110/157); Thomas Robinson, 1772, (NA, C103/195); William Armroid, 1773, (NA, C110/146); Richard Davies, 1778, (NA, C110/187); Thomas Marriot, 1779, (LMA, ACC/0358/001); George Perring, 1780, (NA, C108/83); Elizabeth Wilson, 1780, (NA, PROB 31/683/495); James Waller, 1782, (NA, C108/ 367); William Chenery, 1785, (NA, C107/137); John Jackson, 1787, (NA, J90/1843); Thomas Massey, 1788, (NA, C108/166); Mr Webb, 1792, (NA, C108/285); William George Blachford, 1793, (NA, E140/6/1); Goddier, 1793, (NA, J90/434); Willam Cowden, 1796, (NA, PROB 31/915/53); James Blatch, 1796, (NA, PROB 31/915/62); Gawler Gryffyth Rickman, 1800, (NA, PROB 31/921/733); John Harris, 1800, (NA, PROB31/915/80); Nicholas Browning, 1800, (NA, PROB 31/921/736); John Sears, 1800, (NA, PROB 31/921/639)

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CLA/008/EM/01/018

Book of Plans of City Lands and Bridge House Properties, 1680-1720, vol. 2.
CLA/008/EM/01/019

Sun Insurance Office Limited, Ground Plan Sketches of Business Premises Insured,
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1791-1791 F/WHB/ 003

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